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GALA CHRISTMAS ISSUE

INTERVIEW DAVID DUCHOVNY

20Q GORE VIDAL

Gold Medal Ice Skater KATARINA WITT NUDE

NEW STORIES BY JOYCE CAROL OATES AND ETHAN COEN

SUPER WORKOUT ADVICE FROM MICHAEL JORDAN'S TRAINER

INSIDE THE PLAYBOY MANSION
The tour (and the photos) you've always wanted

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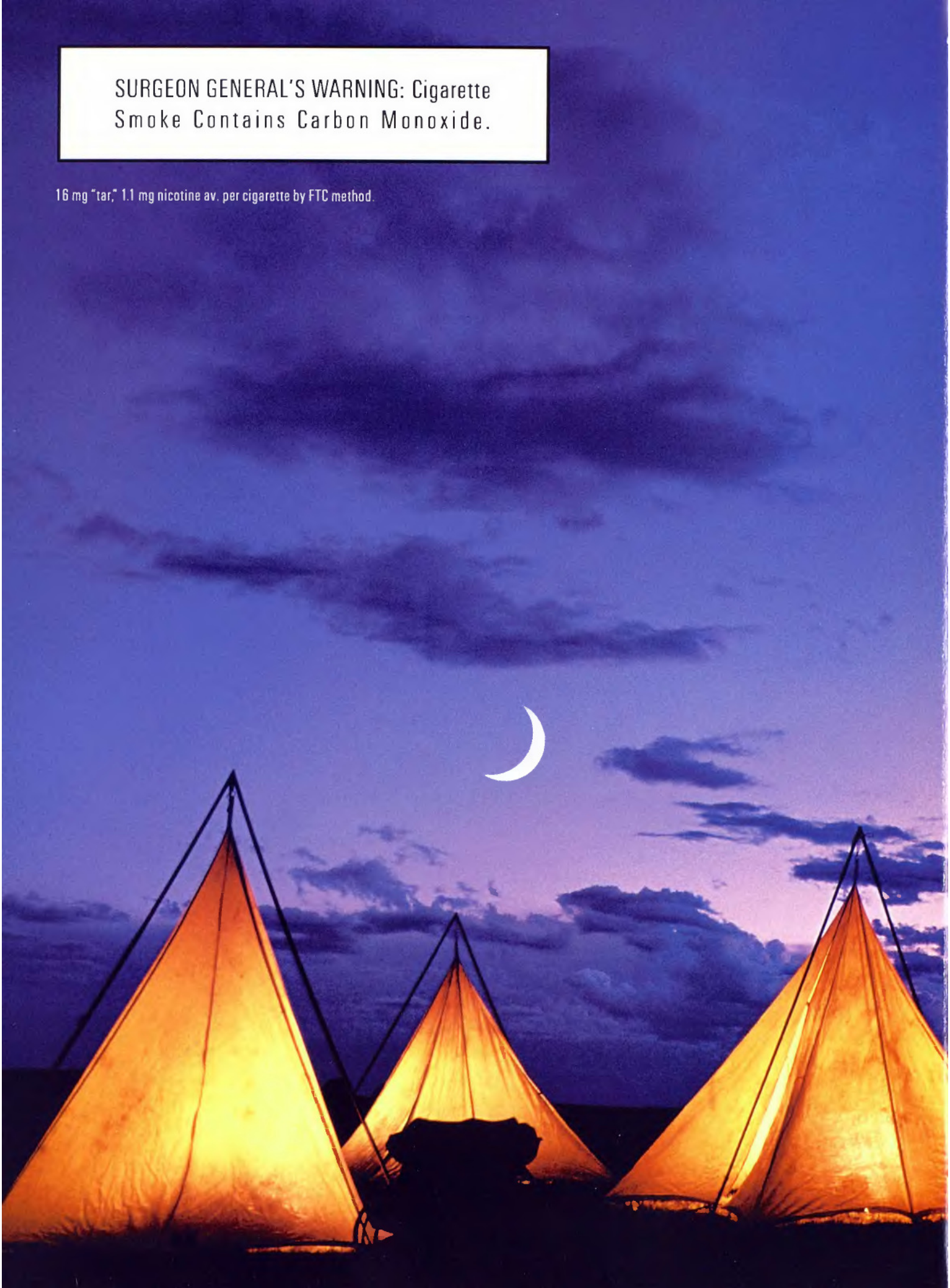
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IT'S ONLY NATURAL to put on weight during the holidays, so you'll understand if this issue is a bit heavy. Just have a seat, feast your eyes and feed your head. We've prepared a big spread that includes ice capades, X-capades, wild women and crazy weather. May we suggest an appetizer? To Witt: Our cover shot of gold-medal Olympian **Katarina Witt** is by Contributing Photographer **Stephen Wayda.** Among skating's acrobats, Katarina reigns as queen of the ice. She's also comfortable sportscasting and appearing in films such as *Ronin*. Now she has posed for a Zamboni-revving pictorial, minus those skimpy outfits we used to pray she'd fall out of. Even the Russian judge would score it all a ten.

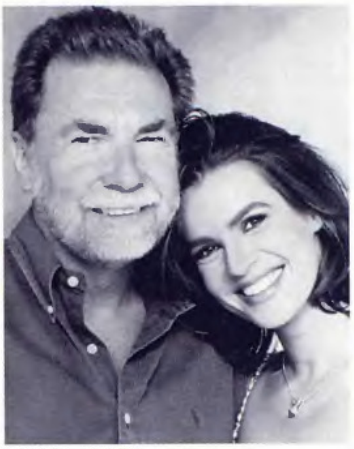
To get the party started right, we invite you to read *Inside the Playboy Mansion*, an excerpt from the forthcoming book (General Publishing) by **Gretchen Edgren.** It's a rabbit's-eye view of a man-made Garden of Eden that features rare photos of the Bunny Dorm, Hef's round beds and curvy girlfriends, and the stoned Midsummer's Night Party with Cameron Diaz in a slinky negligee. Then, in *Mansion Life*, swing-time chronicler **Bill Zehme** explains why Hef is the consummate high-life host. Zehme, who wrote the recent book of life-advice *The Way You Wear Your Hat: Frank Sinatra and the Lost Art of Livin'*, got so immersed in all things Hef he donned pajamas for his photo.

A *Playboy Interview* with **David Duchovny** in our Christmas issue: coincidence or conspiracy? As a hit movie and TV series, *The X-Files* gives voice to the paranoid futurist in all of us—Duchovny calls it "a cop show with paranormal phenomena." He also claims the show doesn't need him now. However, with his following of *X*-philes, his marriage to scrumptious Téa Leoni and his break-out ability, he doesn't need the show either. Contributing Editor **Lawrence Grobel** conducts an interview that will forever rid Duchovny of his dour reputation. You'll learn of his porn-watching habits and that at 16 he had a "Mrs. Robinson." Then Duchovny takes us back to Yale for a class with budding feminist Naomi Wolf and on to Thailand for an opium-inspired night of farm animal fun.

The world according to Gore: Forget aliens. **Gore Vidal** says corporate vultures (and Truman) ruined the republic. As a literary titan who has turned history into a full-contact sport with his steamy novels and political views, Vidal has a better sense of government than most senators have. In a provocative *20 Questions* by **Joseph Dumas,** Vidal spanks Truman Capote and sees the black hand of the rich humiliating the Clintons for their health care plan. We particularly like Vidal's response when he's asked if he can keep a secret: "Why should I, if you can't?"

Ah, winter. Snow in Texas and mild, sun-filled days in Alaska. Baby, it's weird outside. The United States has experienced years of record-breaking heat, flash floods, hurricanes and tornadoes. In *Meteorological Mayhem!* **Michael Parrish** tracks the storm-clouded debate over global warming. Did you know that a rise in temperature of a few degrees could lead to outbreaks of dengue fever? It's the Weather Channel meets *Firing Line*. Longtime contributor **Reg Potterton** had about all the weather one can take and still live to write about it. Reg left Chicago to cross churning seas in a sailboat. *Racing the Savage Atlantic* is the account of his harrowing endurance test (the painting is by **Eldon Trimingham III**). Upon his return, Reg told us about a virus that swept through the boat. "We called it the double-ender," he says, "because it struck at both ends simultaneously."

Dead guy with a hard-on. Chinese finger trap. Anyone who has seen *Clerks* or *Chasing Amy* knows the influence filmmaker **Kevin Smith** has had on the cultural vernacular. Watching one of his low-budget films is like hanging out with your chucklehead friends, without the vandalism. Next up is Smith's most ambitious film project, a skewering of organized religion called *Dogma*. In *The Clerk, the Girl and the Corduroy Hand Job*, a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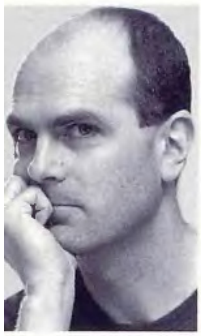

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Playboy Profile written by **Stephan Talty,** you'll meet the Everyman of his generation in his hometown of Red Bank, New Jersey. You'll also gain insight into what drove Smith to go the arty route (the answer may lie in the title of the piece).

There are chick flicks and dick flicks, and then there are movies by **Neil LaBute.** He snuck up on audiences in 1997 with his startling debut, *In the Company of Men*, followed this year by his scathing take on lust, *Your Friends and Neighbors*. Turns out he can also surprise you in print. *In the Company of Men: The Lost Scene* is a previously unpublished monolog by his character Chad. Father may know best, but Chad's mother knows what boys like. "I like to explore boundaries," says LaBute. "That's what PLAYBOY is all about, right?" Of course, the rules on exploration change when you have a mate. Long-lasting unions, as **Bruce Jay Friedman** points out in his charmingly cynical essay *The Secrets We Keep*, usually rely on a tacitly acknowledged nondisclosure pact. Don't ask, don't tell and for God's sake, wipe that smile off your face. Read Friedman's piece and commit it to memory—but don't tape it to the fridge. Maybe you keep slipping up. Maybe you're chained to the doghouse and don't care if you get out. If so, it might be time to leave your love behind. In a PLAYBOY quiz, **Gavin Edwards** asks, *Are You Tired of Your Girlfriend?* So go ahead—take the test. And this time try not to cheat. (Art by **Steve Brodner.**)

In the holiday spirit of giving hell, sexual revenge is a theme in this month's fiction. Few writers can unnerve a reader like **Joyce Carol Oates** can. In her short story *The Last Man of Letters* (illustration by **István Orosz**), four nubile women in the publishing business scheme to give a bloated, belligerent novelist the night of his life, so to speak. Together with his brother Joel, **Ethan Coen** filmed such darkly comic classics as *Fargo* and *The Big Lebowski*. He's also a great fiction writer. *It Is an Ancient Mariner*, featuring a mistress who makes love as vigorously as a Sherwin-Williams paint mixer, is from his new collection of stories, *Gates of Eden* (Rob Weisbach Books/William Morrow). **Charles Burns** did the painting.

Shmooze the boss. Eat and drink what you can to compensate for your cheap-ass employer's failure to offer a Christmas bonus. Encourage the intern to dance naked. As the late **Phil Hartman** and writer **Robert Crane** demonstrate in their *Guide to the Holiday Office Party*, the year-end shindig is loaded with opportunity. It's business as bacchanalia—a situation ripe for a little satyr. (**Janet Woolley** did the artwork.) Another year, another season of star-studded screwups. In *Celebrity Christmas Carols*, humorist **Robert S. Wieder** serenades a cast that includes Bill Gates and Ken Starr. You'll be humming Wieder's *Little Drummer Boy*, his paean to George Michael, every time you hear the sound of one-handed clapping. (The illustrations are by **Sebastian Kruger.**) Speaking of beating the bushes, the aforementioned PLAYBOY historian **Gretchen Edgren,** Associate Photo Editor **Patty Beaudet-Francès** and Senior Art Director **Chet Suski** have scoured the heavens and gossip rags for *Sex Stars 1998*. This year's newcomers Kate Winslet and Catherine Zeta-Jones join perennials Cindy Crawford and Jenny McCarthy in our parade of pin-ups. If you're wondering where we've tucked Monica Lewinsky, have a look at the *Forum*. In *Starr-Crossed Lovers*, Senior Editor James R. Petersen has some words of advice for Slick Willie and Jezebel.

We're starting a new tradition this year: *Playboy's Ten Best Dressed Men* by Fashion Director **Hollis Wayne.** It's not a collection of trendoids and pretty faces—just guys with taste (think Howie Long and Michael Douglas). They show how to look good while making the rounds. You may wish to study *Work Out Like Mike* by **Bob Condor** of the *Chicago Tribune*. Tim Grover helped keep Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen in championship shape, and his workout advice is just as useful for plain mortals. Grover has very specific tips on how to lift more effectively and how to maximize your workout time. The Bulls did it six times, but we've got our own three-peat: our Playmates of the Month, the **Dahm** triplets, photographed by Contributing Photographer **Richard Fegley.** That's right—three Playmates. Who says Santa isn't real?

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Rigor Motorist

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COVER STORY

Katarina Witt doesn't need to be on ice skates to score a perfect 10. For a holiday treat, the Olympic gold medal winner steps off the ice and communes with mother nature. She didn't melt—but you might. Our cover was produced by West Coast Photo Editor Morilyn Grabowski, photographed by Stephen Wayda and styled by Jennifer Tutor. Katarina's hair and makeup were styled by Alexis Vogel for the Fred Segal Agency. Our Rabbit can't resist a winner.

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AN AMERICAN ORIGINAL

Though I do not always agree with him, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (*Playboy Interview*, September) should be credited for the many good things he's done for this country. If Congress is a raucous tavern, Moynihan is a bartender who always gives useful advice.

John Kmetz
Washington, D.C.

Every time I see a picture of Moynihan, I think he's either the human embodiment of a Kewpie doll, a leprechaun who bowled tenpins in the Catskills with Old Rip or a man who just stepped out of the musty pages of *The Pickwick Papers*. Even his name is Dickensian. I still think he's all of the above, but now that I've read his *Playboy Interview*, I know he's a real U.S. senator to boot.

Zoltan Gergely
Ithaca, New York

As the ranking minority member of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Moynihan decides how to spend my tax dollars. Yet he claims he has no executive abilities and that his wife keeps the checkbook. We need businesspeople to run this country, not historians and philosophers.

H.A. Thompson
Charlotte, North Carolina

SEX IN THE FAST LANE

PLAYBOY has always presented amusing articles about how to meet women, but Peter Alson's *Speed Seduction* (July) really caught my attention. It begged to be tested, so I picked a personal ad, called the number and read an excerpt from the article over the phone. The woman called me the next day, and I was eager to meet her. I couldn't believe it worked. She was very cute. On our date she revealed that she thought the message was strange, but nevertheless put my name and number on the top of her list. She couldn't explain why. I think there might be something to this subliminal stuff after all. Oh yeah—she asked me out again.

Mark Diorio
Modena, New York

PORN PRINCESS

Nina Hartley (*Nina Hartley Is the Smartest Woman in Porn*, by Chip Rowe, September) is not only smart, but also well adjusted. As a clinical psychologist, I've come to regard sexual dysfunction as routine in American women. In a culture that considers her behavior tramplike, Nina should be a poster person for sound mental health. She acknowledges normal desire in an abnormal world.

Dr. Stephen Mason
Laguna Niguel, California

I'm a 43-year-old businesswoman, bisexual exhibitionist and sometime adult entertainer. I've been a swinger for 15 years and a friend of Nina Hartley's for ten. I applaud PLAYBOY for featuring Nina in a positive light. She has helped many couples in the swinging community and she's as down to earth as she is sexy.

Honey Rivers
Irvine, Texas

Hartley says that women will feel freer to say yes to sexual pleasure when men start honoring their nos. The trouble is, no doesn't always mean no. Men's inability to distinguish a disingenuous no from a sincere one, accompanied by the worry of being labeled wimps, keeps us thoroughly confused. A better solution? Women should take the initiative. When a woman wants to date a guy or take him to bed, she should simply say so. Then there wouldn't be any mind games.

Jerry Boggs
Livonia, Michigan

Hartley claims she never says no to her husband's requests for oral sex. The caveat is that the poor bastard gets a

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mere five minutes. What bullshit. The guy shouldn't expect a blow job if his partner doesn't feel like it. I've been the recipient of at least 2500 blow jobs in the 17 years my wife and I have been together. Maybe a dozen took less than ten minutes. Most took 15 to 20 minutes. Some took longer. I'll have to ditch my Nina Hartley tapes. Now every time I see her in the clinch, I'll imagine a ticking watch in the background.

Max Golden
Greenville, North Carolina

IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING

I was delighted to read about swing, fashion and dance in Bob Sloan and Steven Guarnaccia's *Swing's the Thing* (September). I began swing dancing two years ago and have been an avid fan since. But I don't agree that the lindy hop is easy to fake if your partner knows what she's doing. Nothing causes more confusion than giving a good dancer a bad lead. Dance floors are becoming crowded with clods who think they can fake it.

Nate Kenworthy
Longmont, Colorado

The zoot suit illustration in *Swing's the Thing* is missing something—the peaked lapels. The reet pleats were deep pleats, not wide pleats and, as I recall, the zoot suit was the entire outfit, not just what you call the racket jacket. Many of the items in your *Jive Talk Glossary* predate the era: boodle, copacetic, dead pigeon, drip, all of the terms referring to money, as well as brush and schnozz.

William Stevens
Micanopy, Florida

LITTLE ANNIE FANNY

Thanks for bringing back an American classic. Seeing *Little Annie Fanny* (September) again after ten years was a treat. Ray Lago and Bill Schorr have kept the faith. They have reincarnated this country's most revered cartoon.

David Price
Chico, California

I earnestly welcome back *Little Annie Fanny*. She's the heart of PLAYBOY and I loved her at first sight. I followed her from "Commercials" to "James Bomb" and into the Seventies with "Women's Lib" and "Muscles." Annie marked the times for me—and did so with panache and hipness.

Philip Pennington
Oswego, Illinois

BAREFOOT AND PREGNANT

After seeing the Lisa Rinna pictorial (*Melrose Mom*, September), I've decided that the human body is beautiful. That's why I'm announcing to my girlfriend today that I'm proud of my body and my belly and will no longer do sit-ups or put down that beer. I am man, hear me roar.

Michael Moore
Nashville, Tennessee

Lisa Rinna proves that pregnant is beautiful. Her pictorial should make pregnant women feel proud and sexy.

Donna Noble Priehs
Palm Springs, California

What a wonderful gift Lisa Rinna has shared with PLAYBOY readers.

Harry Pitchford III
Lawton, Oklahoma

My husband and I have always admired the class with which PLAYBOY portrays nudity. I'm sure Harry Hamlin is very proud of his beautiful wife, Lisa, but her naked body should be for his eyes only, not your subscribers'. Next

time around, please do the photo shoot after the baby arrives.

Cathy Forehand
Rincon, Georgia

Demi Moore, eat your heart out.

Shelby Dunny
Knoxville, Tennessee

CHANGING DIAPERS

Asa Baber's "Killers in Diapers" (*Men*, September) is right on target. As a kindergarten teacher, I'm often amazed at the behavior I see in children as young as four years old. Any elementary school teacher can tell you that violent behavior often begins at a very young age.

Karen Sweaney
Bakersfield, California

There is empirical support for Baber's premise that violent behavior is acquired within the first three years of life. Recent research suggests that it can appear even earlier than that. Many studies have examined the significant role of genetics in criminality. Identical twins separated at birth and reared in different environments strongly resemble each other in many traits, even criminality. While we are not all doomed to follow what nature dictates, the influence that genes have on behavior can't be ignored.

Laura Black
Fort Smith, Arkansas

Hooray for Asa Baber. When I saw the illustration accompanying this September's column, I thought, Oh no, not another article blaming guns for crime. Instead Asa came through with his usual skills using logic, not just heart.

Woodrow Wilson
Hope, Michigan

CAR WRECK

Tim Hackman's letter about Nascar having no appeal north of the Mason-Dixon line (*Dear Playboy*, September) leads me to believe he's been living in a cave. Nascar is a billion-dollar-a-year business, and tracks in the North sell out before it even rolls into town.

John Dainus
Fort Myers, Florida

Hackman's comments about Nascar racing show his ignorance on two levels—stock-car racing and geography. Perhaps he's never heard of Michigan International Speedway or the tracks at Pocono, Pennsylvania, Watkins Glen, New York or Loudon, New Hampshire. These tracks hold Busch and Winston Cup races, which attract hundreds of thousands of spectators each year.

Gary Hartzfeld
Davison, Michigan

CLASSICAL GAS

I was thrilled to see Leopold Froehlich's review of the new Jussi Björling CD anthology (*Music*, June). Björling has a perfect tenor voice. I congratulate PLAYBOY for reviewing classical music.

Joseph Arico
Marmora, New Jersey

THE MINIDISC, PART II

Gary Brine's letter about the minidisc (*Dear Playboy*, September) states that the minidisc can't replace the tape because it's too expensive. I'm not sure where he received his information, but I purchased my portable Sony MD recorder and player for $400. I replaced my old single-tray CD player with a 25-CD Optical-Ready CD player for $150. Throw in a $30 optical cable and I was good to go. It wasn't cheap, but it didn't cost $917—and it was worth every penny to get rid of those awful analog cassettes.

Paul Silverstein
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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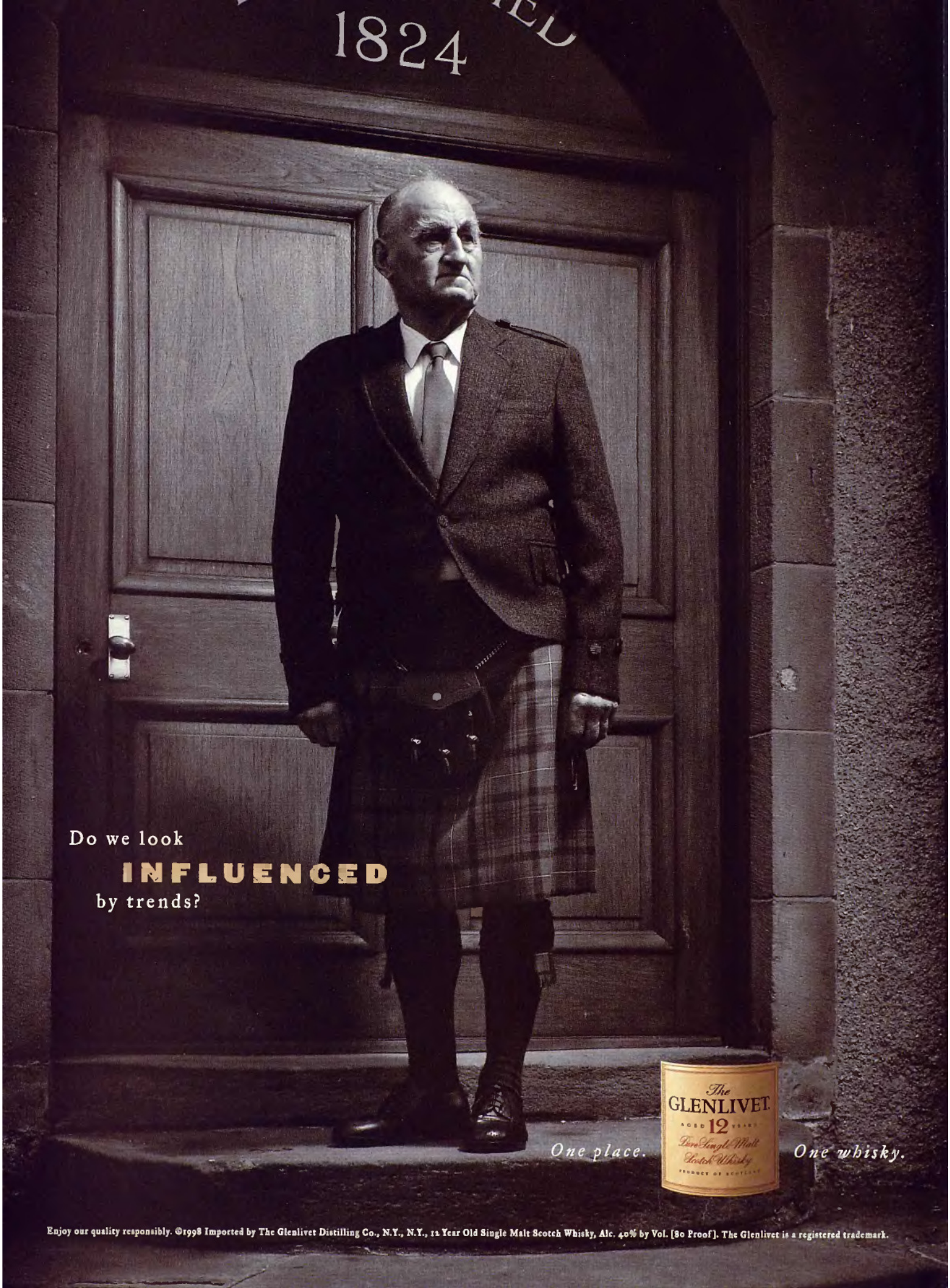

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PLAYBOY AFTER HOURS

TOO RUDE FOR THE TUBE?

Comedian Robert Schimmel has been praised by Steve Martin and George Carlin. So why hasn't he had any luck on TV? As he explains on his new album, *If You Buy This CD, I Can Get This Car* (Warner), "The last time I was on *Late Night With Conan O'Brien* I said, 'I just had nitrous oxide for the first time.' My dentist told me, 'Robert, you're going to feel a little prick in your mouth.' And I said, 'Better turn up the gas all the way before that starts happening.' Haven't been asked back." Schimmel's take on sex is rough, in a winsome way. For example, he gave his daughter a new car. "When her boyfriend saw it," Schimmel says, "he told me, 'I wish you were my dad.' I said, 'I don't, because then you'd be fucking your sister.'" The CD is worth picking up for the songs alone. It includes the touching ballad *Prison Love*, which features the chorus, "It's hard to relax your sphincter when you're crying." We can't wait till he plays San Quentin.

LEONARDO'S ENDOWMENT

The National Italian American Foundation, an organization that doesn't get hung up on details, made public its plans to bestow this year's lifetime achievement award on 23-year-old ladies' man Leonardo DiCaprio. We hear that next year the foundation will examine Leo's career as an actor.

GENDER GAP

Illinois senators Richard Durbin and Carol Moseley-Braun want the General Accounting Office to find out why U.S. Customs agents at O'Hare International Airport strip-search three times as many women as men. We were curious, too, but then realized their honest explanation may be the most obvious one: Women have more hiding places.

HATE NAIL

"You scratch my back, I'll scratch your face off." The Respect company of San Francisco has launched PMS nail polish, which changes color as the wearer's mood shifts (actually, the polish responds to hand temperature). The hue Vexed Violet turns into Self-Centered Silver, Nympho Navy morphs into Groaning Green and Gotta Have Chocolate becomes Estrogen Emerald. Like all great products, PMS nail polish has provoked complaints, this time from indignant female sales clerks in Minnesota. They badgered and nagged the Dayton-Hudson store there into dropping Pyst-off Purple. Made them upset.

TOMMY GIRL

It's appropriate that *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* is enjoying its incredible off-Broadway run just south of Manhattan's meatpacking district, a notorious transvestite hooker hangout. In the words of the title character, the rock musical is about "how a slip of a girly boy from East Berlin became the internationally ignored songbird barely standing before you." Hedwig, played by John Cameron Mitchell, tells his tragic tale backed by his band, the Angry Inch—which is also his name for the nubbin of flesh he's left with after a botched sex-change operation. Hedwig never slips into simple campy drag nor lets his melancholy grow too maudlin. "I think of the people I have come upon on the road," he says thoughtfully, "and the people who have come upon me." Despite his physical shortcomings, Hedwig is the hottest thingie in New York. Think of John Cameron Mitchell as the best Bowie imitator since the Thin White Duke hit the stage for the Serious Moonlight World Tour. Soon you can judge for yourself. Recently the principals cut a deal with New Line to make a Hedwig movie, which should allow the post-op rock star to grow bigger than he ever imagined.

ILLUSTRATION BY GARY KELLEY

TOTO RECALL

Academic theories of deconstruction have finally reached TV land—or at least the other side of the rainbow. Here is a plot summary of *The Wizard of Oz*, recently published in the TV listings of California's *Marin Independent Journal*: "Transported to a surreal landscape, a young girl kills the first woman that she meets, then teams up with three complete strangers to kill again."

DUSTBUSTERS

Michael Jackson take note. Because of all the toxic smoke from last year's forest fires in Southeast Asia, there was a shortage of face masks in Malaysia. Two government employees saved the day by recommending that people wear improvised devices made from brassieres. News reports say the bras last longer than regular face masks and are much more comfortable—especially if you rest your chin right above her belly button.

CHECK OUT HER WHR

Do you know why you're attracted to this month's Playmate? Of course you do. It's her waist-to-hip ratio. Devandra Singh, a psychology professor at the University of Texas, believes a woman's WHR plays a key role in whether men find her desirable. In many cultures men express a preference for women with a WHR of 0.7 or less (that's a 26-inch waist and 37-inch hips, or a 28-inch

RAW DATA

SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS

QUOTE

"I just accepted them as a great accessory to every outfit. Who needs a necklace when you have these?"—JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT, STAR OF *Party of Five*, COMMENTING ON HER BREAST DEVELOPMENT

SHORT ORDER

Number of years that the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine of papal infallibility has been in existence: 128.

INCOMING!

In 1968 percentage of college freshmen who said the purpose of higher education is to form a meaningful philosophy of life: 83. Percentage of freshmen in 1997 who felt this way: 41. In 1968 percentage of freshmen who said a college education would enable them to have financial security: 41. Percentage of freshmen in 1997 who said the point of college is to be "financially well-off": 75.

MARCH OF THE TIN SOLDIERS

At a Christie's auction in London and New York last year, price paid for 50,000 toy soldiers from Malcolm Forbes' collection: $846,368.

THE BODY POLITIC

According to researchers at Virginia Commonwealth University, number of years until there are as many women as men holding public office (based on the current rate of increase): 584.

TOWERING INFIRMO

Tilt of the Leaning Tower of Pisa shortly after its initial construction in 1173: 0.2 degrees to the north. Tilt after construction was completed in 1370: 2 degrees south. Current tilt: 5.5 degrees south. The number of commissions formed during this century to repair and stabilize the tower: 15.

FACT OF THE MONTH

According to the *Book of Answers*, you'd get 364 gifts from your true love if you received all the presents mentioned in the song *The 12 Days of Christmas*.

GOING TO THE DOGS

Number of dogs that are employed by the U.S. armed forces: 1600. Number employed by the Customs Service: 450. Number (all beagles) employed by the Department of Agriculture: 50. By the Secret Service: 35. CIA: 7.

DHARMA SUMS

Value of Jack Kerouac's estate at the time of his death in 1969: $91. Estimated value of the estate today: $10 million.

PISS POOR PLANNING

Number of pavilions in the $1 billion Getty Museum in Los Angeles: 3. Number of restrooms: 2.

BOOM AND BLOCKBUSTER

Revenue of Blockbuster Video last year: $2.6 billion. Total revenues of the next four leading video chains: $1.1 billion. Percentage of video market controlled by Blockbuster: 25. Percentage decrease of total video rentals last year: 4.

EVERY LITTLE BIT HURTS

Number of mosquito bites required to drain the blood from a human being: 2.8 million.

WHEEL TOUGH GUYS

Percentage of licensed drivers in the U.S. who are men: 51. Percentage of fatal car accidents in which men were driving: 74.

A CREDIT TO THE NATION

According to the Consumer Federation of America, number of credit cards with continuing debt balances of $7000 or more: 55 million to 60 million. Average annual interest on these cards: $1000. —PAUL ENGLEMAN

waist and 40-inch hips). Women with measurements such as these have a pear shape, which the primitive part of a guy's brain interprets as a sign of health and fertility. A study of 10,000 women found that their average WHR was the same as that of a Barbie doll—0.7 on the nose. The *Venus de Milo* measures in at 0.68. Marilyn Monroe was a 0.66. And the average Playmate (36-23-35) couldn't be more fertile, at 0.657.

BACH TO THE FUTURE

The sex changes but the songs remain the same. Wendy Carlos will rerelease the recordings of Walter Carlos, who sold more than a million copies of the 1968 Bach-side-of-the-Moog synthesizer project *Switched-On Bach*. Sometime between 1968 and now, Walter became Wendy. She's still working on her organs and next year will put out the Carlos compilation aptly titled *Switched-On Box*.

BRIT GRIT

The English really do have a better grasp of the mudder tongue. *Cover Magazine* points out that the *Oxford English Dictionary* contains more than 300 words for mud (consider the climate). Blash is liquid mud. Clart is sticky dirt or mud. Cod is mud with shells taken from the bottom of a river. Gumbo is prairie mud. Moya is volcanic mud. Putty is sticky underwater mud. Riley is thick, turbid mud. Slumgullion is muddy deposit in a mining sluice and stabble is liquid mud caused by continual foot traffic.

SEA OF LOVE

It's not the size of the ship, it's how you hit the iceberg. A report published in *Journal of Urology* shows that the clitoris is much larger than previously thought. According to Australian researcher Helen O'Connell of Royal Melbourne Hospital, current anatomy books don't illustrate the true extent of the organ, which reaches three and a half inches inside a woman's body. "Sometimes the whole structure is drawn as a dot," she said. "They draw the tip of the iceberg but not the iceberg." They often leave out the seals and the penguins, too.

CAGED BIRDS DO SING

The various regional governments in Spain and the accredited national flamenco clubs ran a contest to find the best flamenco singer incarcerated in the Spanish prison system. One hundred fifty inmates sent in demos, and 30 finalists were chosen. The winners were José Serrano, a convicted murderer who had served 18 years of a 25-year sentence, and Antonio El Agujetas, who had served 12 years of a 15-year drug rap. Now on provisional parole, the two cut an album called *Two Cries of Freedom*, recently released here on ROIR World.

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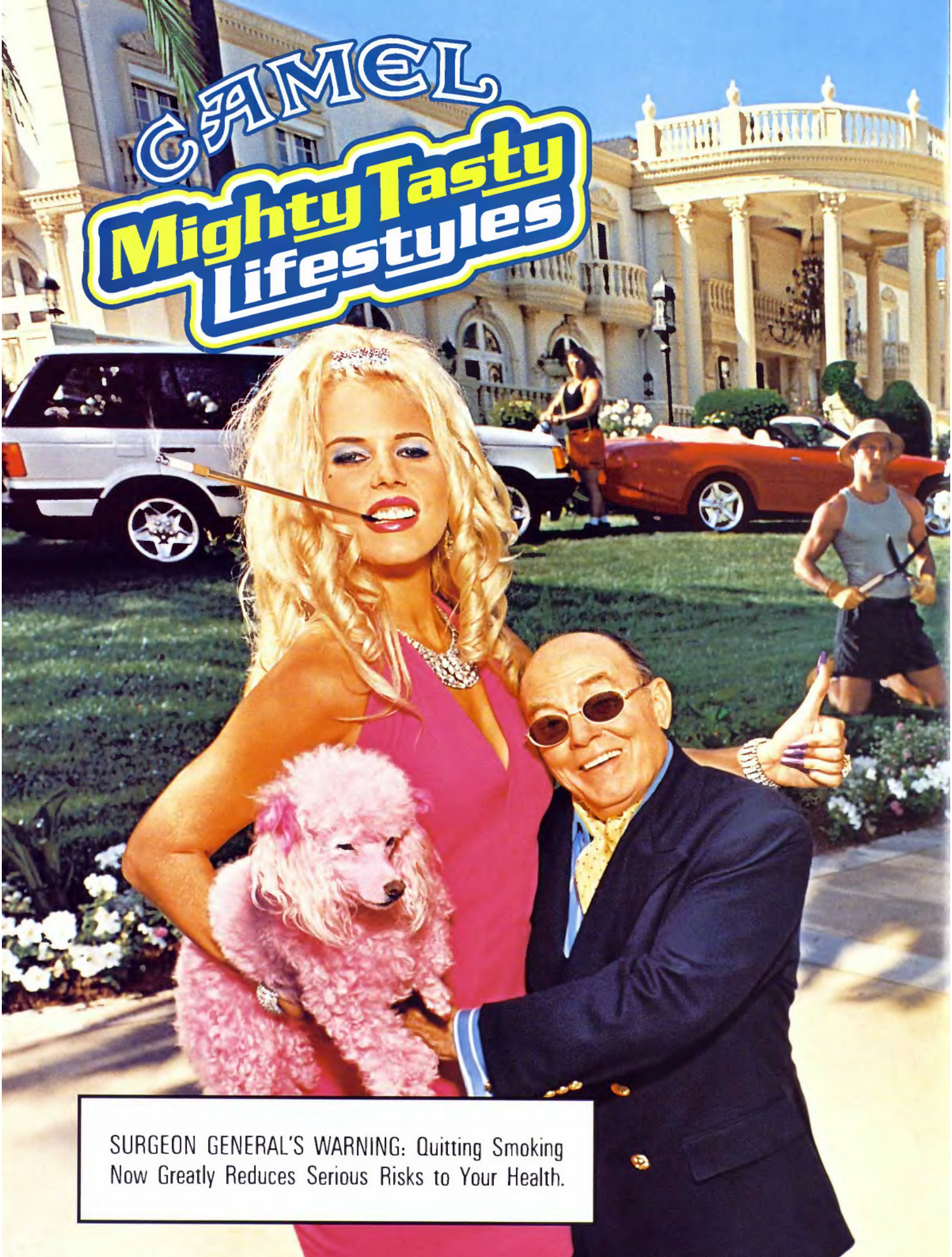
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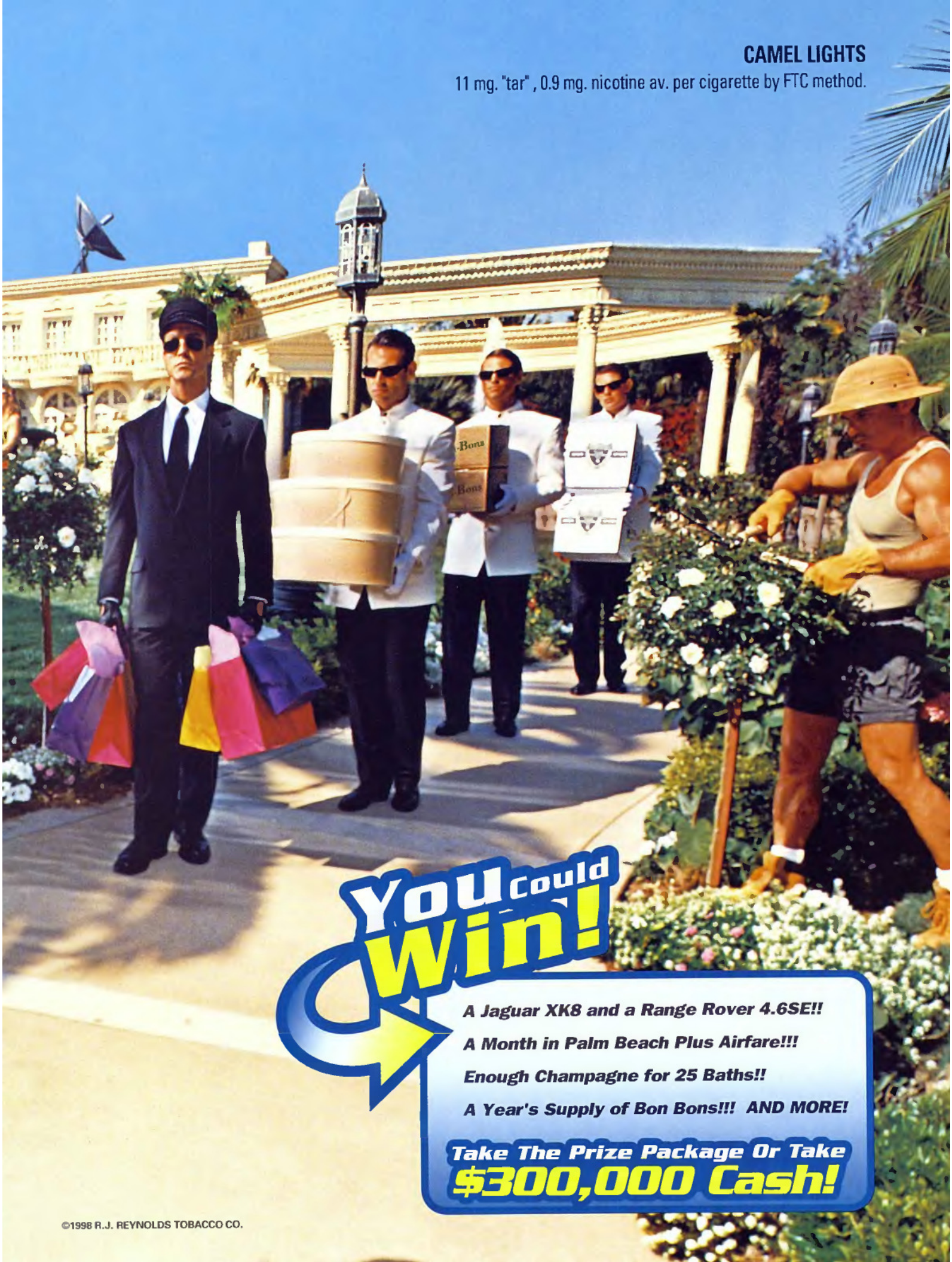
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Trial Lawyer: Prize (ARV*) - Mercedes SL600 ($135,845), a career's worth of legal pads ($1,559), 18-sheet capacity paper shredder ($1,895), Condo in the Cayman Islands for 2 weeks including travel to the Cayman Islands for 2 ($9,700), 20-channel police scanner ($473), Golf clubs ($2,095), Toll-free number for 1 year ($5,475), 10 pinstriped suits ($7,950), Cash ($135,008). Total approximate retail value of prize: $300,000.

Suburban Gold Digger: Prize (ARV*) - Jaguar XK8 ($75,280), Range Rover 4.6SE ($65,125), 1 year's supply of bon bons ($700), Tanning bed ($2,500), Champagne for 25 baths ($37,500), 1 year's supply of diet cola ($364), Condo for 1 month in Palm Beach, Florida including travel to Palm Beach for 2 ($13,000), Cash ($105,531). Total approximate value of prize: $300,000.

*ARV-Approximate Retail Value

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Prize winners must be licensed drivers at time of prize acceptance. Registration, title, licensing fees and insurance costs if applicable are solely the responsibility of the winners. Prize winners do not have choice of car color or options.

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Travel must be completed by May 31, 2000. Restrictions and blackout dates may apply. Accommodations are subject to availability and change without notice. Trip companions must also sign and return a liability/publicity release prior to travel. Taxes, tips, alcoholic beverages, ground transportation not specified herein and all other expenses not specified herein are solely the responsibility of winners. All air transportation will be round-trip coach, unless otherwise specified herein, from airport nearest winner's home location. The difference between any stated value and actual value will not be awarded to winners. In the event of cancellation by winner, the ability to reschedule will be allowed only at Sponsor's discretion.

5. Provisional prize winners will be notified by mail by 6/30/99 and will be required to sign and return Affidavit of Eligibility/Liability and Publicity release within 20 days of delivery. Noncompliance within this time period or return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable or refused may result in disqualification and an alternate winner may be selected. Provisional prize winners are subject to age verification. All federal, state and local income and other taxes, licenses, fees and insurance are the responsibility of the winners. No substitution, transfer of prizes, or election of cash in lieu of prizes will be permitted except at sole discretion of Sponsor or as specifically set forth herein. One prize per household or family. Sponsor reserves the right to substitute a prize of greater or equal value if the prize chosen is not available. Any prize may be awarded in gift certificates or cash sums at Sponsor's sole discretion. All prizes will be awarded and will be fulfilled in 1999, except for travel, which may be fulfilled in 2000.

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Legal Mumbo Jumbo!

MOVIES

By LEONARD MALTIN

WHAT YOU THINK of ***Beloved*** (Buena Vista) will depend on your misery threshold. This very long, deeply emotional adaptation of Toni Morrison's novel about a woman's battle with the world, with angry spirits and with herself is not what you'd call fun. Nor is it particularly enlightening, because instead of illuminating a universal truth about slavery and mistreatment, it deals with a woman whose determination to protect her children drives her to ghastly extremes and a mystical aftermath that haunts her the rest of her life. "Your love is too thick," Danny Glover tells Oprah Winfrey, and the adjective might apply to the film as well. Winfrey (whose company produced the film) is effective in the leading role, and Glover is typically charismatic as a man who comes back into her life after 18 years. Kimberly Elise and Thandie Newton are fine, as well. But Jonathan Demme's languorous approach to the script—credited to three different writers—makes this a long wallow. Women may respond more than men to this deeply felt story, but its air of suffering and mumbo jumbo turned me off. ¥¥

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Movie buffs know the name James Whale, the director responsible for such gems as *Frankenstein*, *Bride of Frankenstein*, *The Old Dark House* and *The Invisible Man* in the Thirties. By the Fifties he was a forgotten man, and it is during this period that we meet him in Bill Condon's exceptional film ***Gods and Monsters*** (Lions Gate). This isn't a film about a director, nor even about horror movies, however. It's a character study of an older man—played by Ian McKellen—who's beginning to hallucinate about his past. Into his tranquil but lonely life comes a burly gardener (Brendan Fraser) who catches his eye and stirs his homosexual yearnings. (His perpetually frowning but protective housekeeper, wonderfully played by Lynn Redgrave, doesn't approve.) *Gods and Monsters* will be too quiet and slow for some, but it's a film of singular intelligence and nuance. Film buffs will love it for that. ¥¥¥½

Stone and Culkin: A mighty family unit.

Mangled mysticism, life-affirming drama and a good idea gone bad.

•

Slam (Trimark) is one of those rare films that restore your faith in movies' ability to lift the human spirit. An award winner at Sundance and Cannes this year, it follows a young man from the ghetto of southeast D.C. into prison, where he meets a woman who inspires (and enables) him to channel his natural talent for writing. The emotions are raw and honest, the filmmaking technique one of probing, in-your-face reportage—as if what we're watching is real. Bravo to writer and director Marc Levin and leading actors Saul Williams and Sonja Sohn, who also contributed to the screenplay. They have done themselves—and the cause of American film—proud. ¥¥¥½

•

Apt Pupil (TriStar) is a disappointing film, like so many based on Stephen King stories. But this one is more disappointing than most because it starts out so well and offers such a juicy premise: A high school boy, having studied the Holocaust, discovers a Nazi war criminal living nearby and decides to interview him. The two leads are terrific: Brad Renfro is completely believable as the boy whose dark side overtakes him as he plunges into his project, and Ian McKellen resists the opportunity to overact

IT'S WHAT'S UP FRONT THAT COUNTS

A movie's titles set the mood and get a film off on the right foot. But for some time, imaginative main title sequences were out of fashion. Now they're back, in a big way.

Pablo Ferro, for one, kept making an impact throughout the lean years. Famous for the distinctive lettering styles and concepts of *Dr. Strangelove*, *Bullitt* and other Sixties hits, he also developed the innovative multiple-screen and rapid-cutting devices integrated into such movies as *Midnight Cowboy* and *The Thomas Crown Affair*. He recently designed the titles for *As Good as It Gets*, *L.A. Confidential* and *Men in Black*, with razor-thin lettering reminiscent of the simple style of *Dr. Strangelove*.

Ferro has adapted to the computer but still does "hand stuff, because a computer is so perfect that some of it doesn't work—it's too stiff."

You'll see the names Balsmeyer and Everett on many films—including ten by Spike Lee (among them *Jungle Fever* and *He Got Game*) and five by the Coen Brothers (*Fargo*, *The Big Lebowski*). "These directors really think about what a title sequence can be, and they're really fun to collaborate with," says Randy Balsmeyer, who works with his wife, Mimi Everett.

Usually, a project requires "three to six months of talking, thinking and doing," but last year Balsmeyer had to conceive and execute the title for Martin Scorsese's *Kundun* in one week.

Balsmeyer and Everett were stepping into big shoes, since Scorsese's recent films had titles by the late Saul Bass, who virtually invented modern graphics with his work for Otto Preminger (*The Man With the Golden Arm*) and Alfred Hitchcock (*Psycho*, *Vertigo* and *North by Northwest*).

Kyle Cooper, who has a master's in graphic design from Yale University, knew from the first time he saw one of Bass' titles that this was what he wanted to do. He and two partners formed their company, Imaginary Forces, several years ago. Among Cooper's recent credits: *Mission: Impossible*, *The Horse Whisperer*, *The Mask of Zorro* and the memorable title sequence for *Seven*.

"Sometimes people say, 'We don't want the title sequence to overshadow the first scene,' but I think the title sequence should be the first scene," says Cooper. On *Seven*, director David Fincher "wanted this kind of frightening foreshadowing. He said, 'Right off the bat, I want to tell the people who have come to see Brad Pitt from *Legends of the Fall* and Morgan Freeman from *Driving Miss Daisy* that they're in the wrong theater.'" —L.M.

McGillis: Back in action.

OFF CAMERA

"It's not like I've stopped acting completely," says **Kelly McGillis.**

If you're wondering what's become of Tom Cruise's leading lady in *Top Gun* and Harrison Ford's Amish dance partner in *Witness*, she has been raising two children, running a restaurant (Kelly's Caribbean Bar) in Key West, doing some television and acting at the Shakespeare Theater in Washington, D.C. But now that her kids are in school, she's willing and able to work in movies again. *At First Sight* cast Kelly as Val Kilmer's protective sister—a reunion for the co-stars of *Top Gun*, who both studied acting at Juilliard long before movies and fame came their way.

"I have an extreme love-hate relationship with visibility and fame," she says. "I am passionately in love with acting, but I am also passionate about being private and being allowed to move about freely with my kids, like every other person in the world."

Still, she's pragmatic enough to know that fame buys her the ability to pursue her first love—acting onstage—and take good parts in small, independent films.

We'll be seeing a lot of McGillis on film. She has finished *Over the Edge*, in which she plays a guilt-ridden policewoman; *The Settlement*, which allowed her to have fun playing "trailer trash"; and *Painted Angels*, a Western drama that casts her as a prostitute trying to raise a son. She has begun *Morgan's Ferry*, opposite Billy Zane, in which she's a tough farm woman threatened by a trio of ex-convicts.

But the memory of *Top Gun* lingers on. "A lot of people come into my restaurant and ask me where Tom is!" she says with a laugh. "It's amazing." —L.M.

in a showy part. The craftsmanship of director Bryan Singer (*The Usual Suspects*) can't be faulted, but the movie gets uglier as it goes along and doesn't know when to quit. ¥½

•

Life Is Beautiful (Miramax) won the Grand Jury Prize at Cannes this year, and it's easy to see why: It's a striking and original piece of work, co-written, directed by and starring the popular Italian comedian Roberto Benigni. He calls it a fable, covering the years 1939 to 1945, and it is the story of a man whose irrepressible spirit is such that when he and his son are taken off to a concentration camp, he refuses to surrender to its horrors. Instead, he determines to shield his four-year-old from the grim reality surrounding them by turning the experience into a giant game. This is a difficult film to describe, because it sounds impossible to pull off—but Benigni does it. It is a remarkable achievement—funny, endearing, humanistic, altogether winning. ¥¥¥½

•

When was the last time you had a good cry? If it has been a while, you owe yourself the experience of seeing ***The Mighty*** (Miramax), a wonderful film based on the novel *Freak the Mighty*, by Rodman Philbrick, and adapted by Charles Leavitt. This film cements director Peter Chelsom's reputation as one of our few modern-day poets, a man who isn't afraid to find heart, and hope, and even surrealistic images in the everyday, as he has before in *Hear My Song* and *Funny Bones*. This is the story of an outcast boy (Elden Henson), so big and dumb he's constantly taunted by his schoolmates, who strikes up an unlikely friendship with his new neighbor, a severely disabled but whip-smart kid (Kieran Culkin). As a team, with the little one hoisted on his big friend's shoulders, they become invincible, like the knights of yore they read about, and whose exploits they emulate in working-class Cincinnati. Sharon Stone plays Culkin's mother, Gillian Anderson a tart criminal moll, and Gena Rowlands and Harry Dean Stanton are Henson's grandparent guardians. They may help draw audiences to *The Mighty*, but it's the boys that you'll respond to and remember. ¥¥¥½

•

The buzz about ***Waking Ned Devine*** (Fox Searchlight) is that it's the next *Full Monty*. If only. But it is an enjoyable blarney-soaked fable about a quirky Irish village (is there any other kind?), in which rascally Ian Bannen tries to figure out which of his 52 neighbors has won the national lottery. To tell more would spoil what surprises the film has in store. The whimsy is more than a bit contrived, but it's pleasant to watch. ¥¥½

MOVIE SCORE CARD

capsule close-ups of current films by leonard maltin

Apt Pupil (See review) A boy discovers a Nazi war criminal living in his hometown; another Stephen King story gone wrong on-screen. ¥½

Bad Manners (11/98) Fine performances by Saul Rubinek, Bonnie Bedelia, David Strathairn and Caroleen Feeney distinguish this comedy-drama about four academics who spend a long weekend at one another's throats. ¥¥¥

Beloved (See review) If the mumbo doesn't get you, the jumbo will. ¥¥

Clay Pigeons (11/98) Vince Vaughn is the mysterious stranger and Janeane Garofalo an FBI agent in this sexy murder yarn that's perhaps too clever for its own good. ¥¥½

54 (Listing only) A dreary, disappointing portrait of Manhattan hotspot Studio 54—but Mike Myers is a standout as owner Steve Rubell. ¥¥

Gods and Monsters (See review) Ian McKellen is perfect as aging movie director James Whale in this elegiac film. ¥¥¥½

Happiness (Listing only) Todd Solondz' brilliant, mordantly funny look at unfulfilled people searching for satisfaction isn't for everyone, but his characters (a guilt-ridden pedophile, a stifled telephone stalker, a boy trying to masturbate) are startlingly real. ¥¥¥½

The Impostors (11/98) Stanley Tucci and Oliver Platt lead a wonderful cast through the paces of an old-fashioned farce. ¥¥¥

Life Is Beautiful (See review) Italian comedian-filmmaker Roberto Benigni's unique and moving fable about a man's refusal to be destroyed by the Nazis. ¥¥¥½

The Mighty (See review) Two young misfits find strength and courage in each other in Peter Chelsom's lovely film. ¥¥¥½

One True Thing (Listing only) Meryl Streep is luminous, Renée Zellweger and William Hurt are ideal in this heartfelt drama about a daughter who is forced to come to terms with her parents. ¥¥¥½

Orgazmo (11/98) Those bad boys of *South Park* take on the porn movie industry in a funny comedy. ¥¥½

Slam (See review) A highly charged story of a young man who uses poetry to transcend ghetto life. ¥¥¥½

Waking Ned Devine (See review) The Irish blarney is laid on a bit thick in this fun story of a tiny village caught up in lottery fever. ¥¥½

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VIDEO

GUEST SHOT

"I own tons of movies," says leading man **Jimmy Smits.** "I'm a member of the Motion Picture Academy, which sends me tapes all the time." Even before he got the freebies, Smits was an avid collector. "I love Spencer Tracy–Katharine Hepburn films. And I like the Jimmy Cagney genre, too—all those tough-guy movies." Smits is partial to standout performances. "I'll watch *Lion in Winter* over and over, simply for the acting. That and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. But I don't mind laughing every now and then, either. *Toy Story* is a riot to me." New films on Jimmy's A-list include *The Apostle* and *Good Will Hunting*. "I just love it when little movies kick the blockbusters in the ass." Don't we all? —SUSAN KARLIN

VIDBITS

Has *Saving Private Ryan* enlisted a whole new army of World War II buffs? Rhino Home Video hopes so—witness its digitally remastered, seven-volume boxed set of Frank Capra's ***Why We Fight*** series ($39.95). Working within the government's propaganda campaign, Capra (an Army Signal Corps major) called on Walter and John Huston, Walt Disney and a handful of studios to help him explain to new doughboys why they were shipping out. The result is a compelling chronicle—with newsreels, official footage and captured enemy film—that shows the true power of moviemaking. Call 800-432-0020.

BIG SCREEN, LITTLE SCREEN

Perhaps in desperation, Hollywood has rediscovered TV series of the Sixties and Seventies. Rerun favorites getting the big-screen treatment this year are *The A-Team*, *My Favorite Martian*, *Green Acres* and *Gilligan's Island*. Their predecessors include:

The Brady Bunch Movie (1995): Part spoof, part homage, this gem skillfully brings the incorruptible Bradys into the Nineties. "Put on your Sunday best, kids, we're going to Sears!" And they do.

The Addams Family (1991): It's creepy and, well, one of the best TV-to-movie transfers ever, thanks to Raul Julia and Anjelica Huston as Gomez and Morticia. Thing deserves a hand, too.

The Untouchables (1987): Kevin Costner steps into the gumshoes of TV's Robert Stack as G-man Eliot Ness, combating no less than Al Capone (Robert De Niro). Sean Connery's earthy sidekick earned him his only Oscar.

The Flintstones (1994): Cranky critics who didn't like this movie had rocks in their heads. Performances shine—from John Goodman's lumbering Fred to Dino's perfect yap. Only Liz Taylor (as Wilma's mother) is yabba-dabba-doo-doo.

Batman (1989): Keaton's cool crusader and Nicholson's Joker save Tim Burton's dark Gotham City spin. But we still prefer the hokey 1966 series. *Ka-pow!*

The Fugitive (1993): The TV show had smarts, but the big screen brings bigger action—with Harrison Ford on the lam (watch out for that train!) and Oscar-winner Tommy Lee Jones in hot pursuit.

Mission: Impossible (1996): In De Palma's slick affair, a bungee-bouncing Tom Cruise and able supporting cast keep faithful to the TV show's claim to fame: an utterly confusing plotline.

The Gong Show Movie (1980): Yes, they made a movie of this amateur-talent game show, where being bad got you gonged off the stage. The Unknown Comic performs with a bag over his head. Which is how paying audiences left the theater. —BUZZ MCCLAIN

LASER FARE

Warner/Image's concurrent wide-screen laser releases of ***Excalibur*** (1981, $40) and ***Camelot*** (1967, $50) make for a rousing tale of the tapes. *Excalibur*'s Arthur (Nigel Terry) is a wash compared with *Camelot*'s Arthur (Richard Harris), though Terry looks more like he needs one. As for Lady Guenevere, *Excalibur* wins swords-down, with Cherie Lunghi outsmoldering Vanessa Redgrave. *Camelot* takes soundtrack honors, with Lerner and Loewe's songs decking *Excalibur*'s bland music. *Camelot*'s making-of featurettes go head-to-head with *Excalibur*'s superior cinematography. And at 181 often leaden minutes, *Camelot* is more of an imposing epic than the 140-minute *Excalibur*. Either way, plan to make a knight of it. —GREGORY P. FAGAN

X-RATED VIDEOS OF THE MONTH

The prince of pretty porn, Andrew Blake, returns with a lusty double feature: ***Delirious*** and ***Wet*** (Studio A Entertainment). Bridging the gap between X and R, Blake celebrates fetishism with beautiful "silicone-free" women. Both films feature primarily girl-girl action. But what they lack in the old in-out they make up for with jaw-dropping beauty. To order the videos, go to www.andrewblake.com.

VIDEO MOOD METER

MOOD	MOVIE
BLOCKBUSTER	***Deep Impact*** (good, decent folk prep for postapocalypse as big-ass comet zeros in; last summer's gentler doom flick), ***Godzilla*** (the buff, reconfigured thunder lizard troshes Manhattan; loud ond fun—especially for the broinless).
MUST-SEE	***The Truman Show*** (rubber-faced Correy is unwitting star of television-scripted life; chicken soup for cynics), ***Bulworth*** (director Beotty stars as desperote senator who raps to conquer; weird but bold satire).
DRAMA	***The Horse Whisperer*** (mystical Montono healer Redford works his magic on K. Scott Thomas ond the horse she limped in on), ***He Got Game*** (joilbird Denzel goes one-on-one with estranged hoops-stor son; three-point swish from Spike).
ACTION	***Homegrown*** (dopey trio of pot farmers fight the Mofio after boss gets offed; B. Bob Thornton soves otherwise silly caper), ***Black Dog*** (ex-con trucker runs guns to save kin; Potrick Swayze is perfect—if you know what we mean).
SLEEPER	***The Last Days of Disco*** (Gotham clubbers search for life's meaning as Studio 54 decays; Whit Stillman's dialogue is o delight), ***The Opposite of Sex*** (Christino Ricci takes off with gay big brother's lover; jacked-up black comedy).

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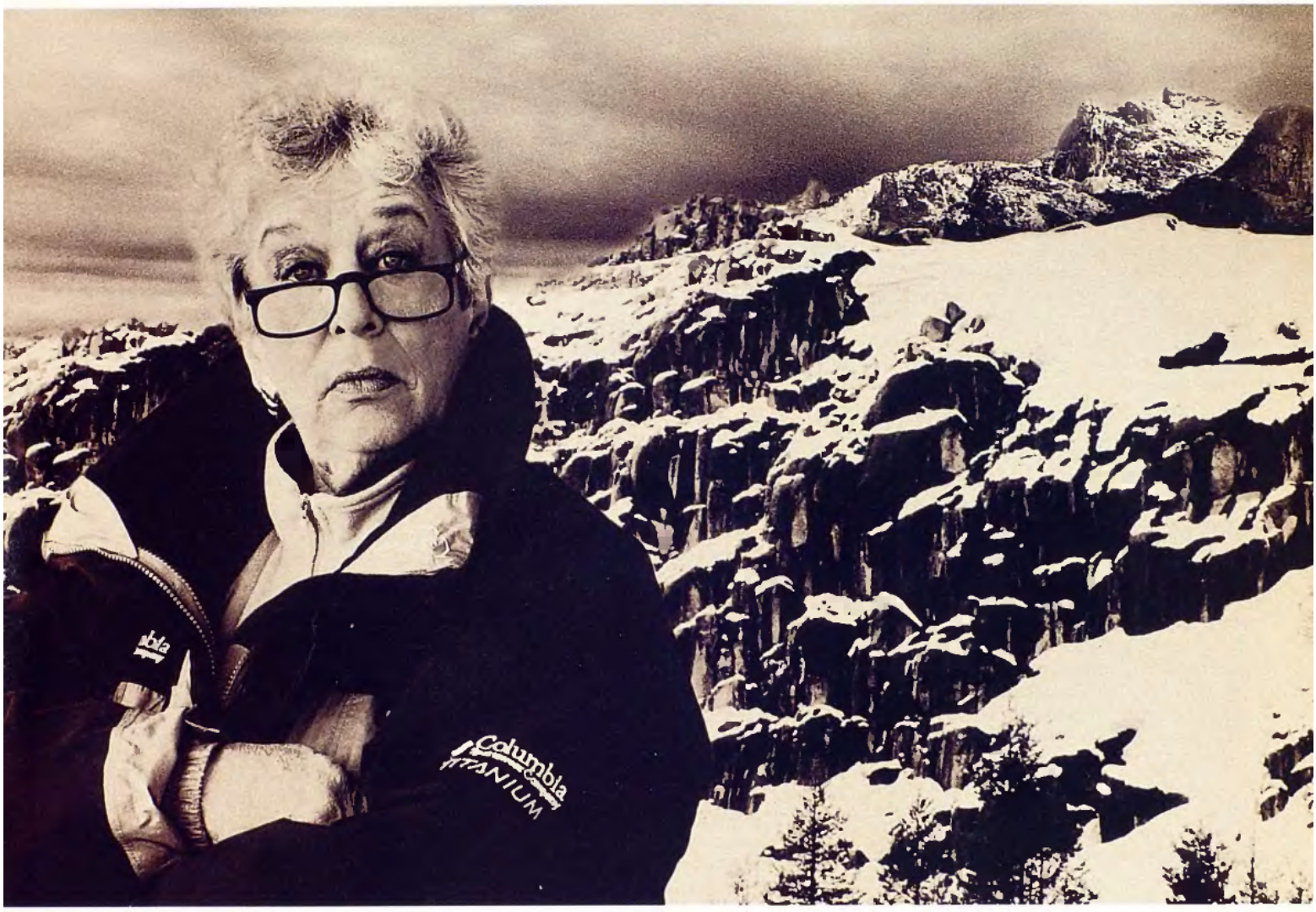

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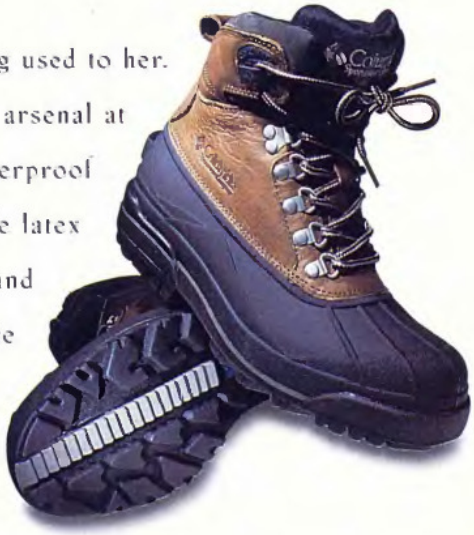

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MUSIC

R&B

JUST AS Aretha Franklin was crucial to the explosion of soul music in the Sixties, Mary J. Blige is essential to its current rebirth. Her early Nineties debut, *What's the 411?*, gave rise to a new wave of R&B singers. One look at the charts shows R&B's commercial power. What's debatable is the quality of the current music. With the exceptions of Babyface and R. Kelly, most of the songwriting is faceless, repetitive and slavishly derivative of earlier hits. That's why live albums are so rare in contemporary black music. So Blige's ***The Tour*** (MCA) puts her in the vanguard. These 24 tracks comprise material from her three studio albums plus *Not Gon' Cry* from the *Waiting to Exhale* soundtrack and some inspired covers (*Mary Jane*, *Misty Blue*). Blige isn't a polished stylist, but she packs real emotion into her singing. On material like the self-penned *My Life* and *Seven Days*, Blige slices into the lyrics with a trademark tartness. When she leans into a song, there's little room for sentimentality.

Gerald Levert is something of a bridge artist. As son of the O'Jays' Eddie Levert, he connects the world of Seventies soul with the current R&B scene. I hope his current solo project, ***Love & Consequences*** (East/West), brings him a wider audience. Instead of demanding things from his mate in his material, Levert explains (*No I'm Not to Blame*, *Point the Finger*) and understands (*It's Your Turn*, *Men Like Us*). A wonderful duet with Mary J. Blige on the Bobby Womack standard *That's the Way I Feel About You* underscores Levert's sensitivity. —NELSON GEORGE

Oh Blige: *The Tour*.

Mary J.,
Motown outtakes and
Earl Scruggs' baby boy.

Most collections of outtakes and rarities by famous artists document interesting failures, brilliant but incomplete song fragments and demo material. It's a tribute to the diversity of Motown that almost every song on ***Motown Sings Motown Treasures: The Ultimate Rarities Collection No. 1*** could have been a hit single. Berry Gordy encouraged his in-house teams of writers, producers and performers to compete with one another to determine which version would get the nod. The Supremes, the Temptations and Stevie Wonder might record the same song, often with different tempos and arrangements. How would a young Stevie Wonder handle *I Hear a Symphony*? Or imagine the Supremes, rather than Martha and the Vandellas, tackling *In My Lonely Room*. Those gems are among the 21 great tracks (18 of them have never been issued) that make this the soul music equivalent of discovering the contents of King Tut's tomb. Marvin Gaye and Gladys Knight had hits with *I Heard It Through the Grapevine*, but the version by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles is in the same league. Other highlights include the Jackson 5 ripping into Robinson's *You've Really Got a Hold On Me*, while David Ruffin brings mature passion to *I Want You Back*. Kim Weston does a slow-burn version of *Stop! In the Name of Love* that transforms the uptempo Supremes hit into a torchy ballad. Gladys Knight and the Pips do a steamy, funked-up *I'm Gonna Make You Love Me* that easily rivals Diana Ross'. In the end, Gordy's crossover instincts usually led him to choose the smoother takes. But the runners-up are terrific.

—VIC GARBARINI

ROCK

Seventies bands have influenced today's music, so it's about time that Seattle's Heart, fronted by the Wilson sisters, got some respect. If Joni Mitchell was the female Dylan, Heart was the female Led Zeppelin. Like Zep, Heart combined light and shade, acoustic intros and monster riffs to create melodic and kick-ass rock and roll. ***Greatest Hits*** (Epic/Legacy) collects *Magic Man*, *Crazy on You*, *Straight On* and 14 other remastered versions of their material. *Barracuda*'s riff could have come from a Soundgarden album, and they do a respectable version of Aaron Neville's *Tell It Like It Is*. That's some range. —VIC GARBARINI

On Amy Rigby's ***Middlescence*** (Koch) she sings about feeling sexy after passing the baby-making years. The former mod housewife (who laid out that story on 1996's *Diary of a Mod Housewife*) sets that age at 35. "I'm who I used to be/But nobody sees me," she sings in *Invisible*, and judging from the way she sounds, that's a shame. Rigby sings her tuneful folk-rock with the kind of heart that promises tenderness to a guy who can communicate with the lights on. She's smart, sane, unpretentious, funny and a little wild sometimes. She's not rolling in dough (or child care either), but she doesn't expect you to make up the difference by yourself. "What's the difference between a drummer and a U.S. Savings Bond?" she joshes. "One will eventually mature and earn money." But tonight she's going to *Give the Drummer Some* anyway. —ROBERT CHRISTGAU

FOLK

On ***Hell Among the Yearlings*** (Almo), Gillian Welch rediscovers everything she needs to know about Appalachian folk music. She has added some contemporary hues that fit right in with the eerie melancholia that inspired it. *Caleb Meyer* tells the story of an attempted rape, thwarted only because the narrator slices Meyer's neck with a broken bottle. "Then I felt his blood/Pour fast and hot/Around me where I laid." A catchy melody with a nice guitar hook, but you don't feel like singing along. Welch's lyrics concern people hellbent on tragedy, pushed along by lust for the wrong man (*The Devil Had a Hold of Me*), by a drug addiction that isn't fun anymore (*My Morphine*) or by the dark side of capitalism in the coal mines (*Miner's Refrain*). She knows how to sing in a spare style, maintaining an authentic humility. The guitars—hers and collaborator David Rawlings'—have an unobtrusive resonance that will remind you that human beings did a pretty good job entertaining themselves before electricity.

Hugh Blumenfeld sings contemporary folk on ***Rocket Science*** (Prime). The songs shift drastically from microscopic introspection to telescopic social commentary. I especially approve of *Long-haired Radical Socialist Jew*, a contemporary gospel tune that reclaims Jesus as an advocate of free school lunches and socialized medicine. The left could use a new anthem, and I, for one, will be singing along. —CHARLES M. YOUNG

COUNTRY

On his first solo album, ***Crown of Jewels*** (Reprise), veteran Nashville producer Randy Scruggs wasn't quite confident enough to carry the load alone, so he

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recruited some pals. The result is a triumph. Travis Tritt hasn't made a track with as much honky-tonk energy as *Amie* in years. Bruce Hornsby hasn't made a rock track as good as *Crown of Jewels* in a while. Emmylou Harris and Iris DeMent seem born to sing *Wildwood Flower* together. John Prine sounds pretty good singing *City of New Orleans*. Scruggs obviously isn't afraid to recast a classic, and his guitar solo on *Both Sides Now* makes you realize how great that hippie cliché is. Scruggs himself sings well on *I Wanna Be Loved Back* with Trisha Yearwood. And the bluesy *Passin' Thru* is, in my opinion, the best thing Joan Osborne has ever sung. Scruggs is just as convincing with straight bluegrass: *A Soldier's Joy* with Vince Gill and *Lonesome Ruben* with Randy's father, banjoist Earl Scruggs, and dobro great Jerry Douglas. Someday, *Crown of Jewels* may have classic status. It deserves it. —DAVE MARSH

RAP

John Forté is one of those educated rappers, and on ***Poly Sci*** (Ruffhouse/Columbia) he takes no pains to hide it. He lets you know he's down with the Nutzbaby Crew, but that doesn't make him a banger. The Sunz of Man, on the other hand, aren't educated in the stay-in-school sense. But they have their own science. When they warn their street brothers on ***Sunz of Man: The Last Shall Be First*** (Red Ant) to "stop killing your own relatives" in their dense, mysterious style, they sound every bit as smart as Forté. Maybe they're even smarter. Hip-hop lives. —ROBERT CHRISTGAU

JAZZ

What do the quiet acoustic sounds of pianist Chick Corea have in common with the electric wallop of Pat Metheny's guitar? Both came to our attention on Seventies albums by vibist and fusion pioneer Gary Burton. On ***Like Minds*** (Concord), Burton brings together his two principal collaborators, and for good measure includes another former cohort, bebop drummer Roy Haynes. You can view the lineup as both Burton's autobiography and a Seventies-rooted jazz supergroup. But the players left their egos at the door and jelled into a supple and understated band. —NEIL TESSER

BLUES

Besides having one of the greatest titles ever, Otis Taylor's ***When Negroes Walked the Earth*** (Shoelace) offers minimalist blues in the John Lee Hooker mode, although Taylor does kick the riff from Jimi Hendrix' *You Got Me Floatin'* on *Ninth Cavalry Blues*. —DAVE MARSH

FAST TRACKS

ROCKMETER

	Christgau	Garbarini	George	Marsh	Young
Mary J. Blige *The Tour*	8	8	8	8	6
Motown Treasures: Ultimate Rarities	7	9	8	9	8
Amy Rigby *Middlescence*	8	7	7	7	7
Randy Scruggs *Crown of Jewels*	6	8	6	9	7
Gillian Welch *Hell Among the Yearlings*	5	7	8	6	8

ALL ELVIS ALL THE TIME DEPARTMENT: It's not too late to catch the **Elvis** exhibit at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. It kicked off this past summer with the Flying Elvis skydiving team from the movie *Honeymoon in Vegas* and runs through the end of the year. Look for pay stubs from El's stint at Crown Electric and Precision Tool, **Lisa Marie's** trike and, uh oh, Elvis' report cards.

REELING AND ROCKING: **Kiss** will make its American movie debut in *Detroit Rock City*, a coming-of-age comedy, set in 1978, that follows four teens who stop at nothing to scam their way into a sold-out Kiss concert. **Gene Simmons** is one of the producers. . . . MTV took inspiration from A&E's popular Biography series. Its version, *Revue*, incorporates performances, personal material, philosophy and humor from rock stars. . . . **Mick Fleetwood** has filmed *Mr. Music* for broadcast early next year on Showtime. . . . In March 1999, the **Beatles'** *Hard Day's Night* will be rereleased, restored and expanded for its 35th anniversary. . . . *Your Friends and Neighbors*, starring **Jason Patric, Ben Stiller** and **Nastassja Kinski,** will have songs from **Metallica** interpreted by the cello quartet **Apocalyptica.** . . . We were tickled to see that **Aerosmith's Joe Perry** made his acting debut on our favorite TV cop show, *Homicide*. But we still miss **Andre Braugher.** . . . **Dwight Yoakam** will produce, star in and direct *South of Heaven, West of Hell*, a screenplay he wrote. . . . We hear **Diana Ross** is contemplating a return to the big screen in a romance produced by **Babyface** and **Tracey Edmonds.**

NEWSBREAKS: Touring the States is *Sang Sista Sang*, a **Smokey Robinson** and **Mickey Stevenson** musical about legends in blues and jazz, including **Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith, Mahalia Jackson** and **Dinah Washington.** . . . **George Clinton** has signed a book deal with Pantheon to write and illustrate his memoirs. . . . Christmas season albums to look for: **Alanis Morissette, Mariah Carey's** greatest hits, **Garth Brooks** live, possibly **Hanson** live and **Celine Dion,** who will also have a TV special. . . . **Ray Manzarek,** who has completed a successful book tour for his memoir, *Light My Fire: My Life With the Doors*, tells fans there is a **Doors** documentary in the works for the year 2000. . . . After reviewing more than 200 grant proposals, **Bad Religion** has awarded a University of Michigan grad student almost $4000 to study forest health and renewal. . . . A new live **Clash** album will be released any day. **Joe Strummer** found the tapes in storage. The tribute CD with **No Doubt, Korn, Ice Cube, Rancid** and the **Indigo Girls** is set to come out in 1999. . . . **Madonna** may be a mother, but she's still hip and canny. Her production company plans to turn *Truth or Dare* (the game in her documentary) into a TV show. For cable? . . . You may see **D'Angelo** and the **Fugees' Lauryn Hill** on tour together. . . . Our critics weigh in on music and culture in two new books: Check out **Nelson George's** *Hip-Hop America* (Viking), which examines pride, aggression, personalities and fashion among inner-city Americans, and **Robert Christgau's** collection of pieces and columns, *Grown Up All Wrong* (Harvard University Press), subtitled *75 Great Rock and Pop Artists From Vaudeville to Techno*. . . . Lastly, in a Washington, D.C. park, a triangular piece of land at Dupont Circle was dedicated to the memory of **Sonny Bono.** A special vault will hold congressional cuff links and the sheet music to *The Beat Goes On*. Now that's showbiz.

—BARBARA NELLIS

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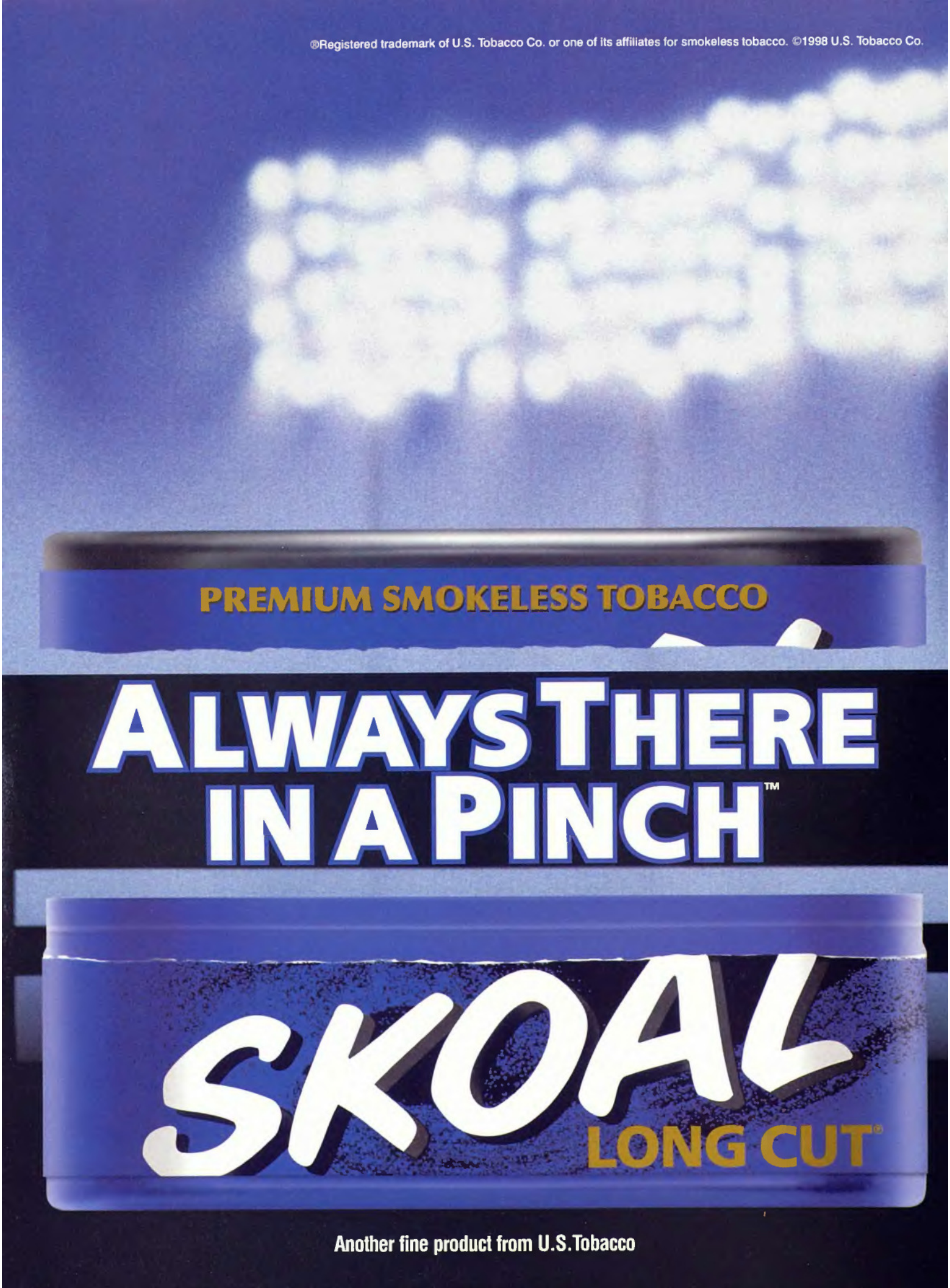

Another fine product from U.S. Tobacco

WIRED

AND THEY'RE OFF

While legal issues are being hashed out that will allow—or ban—gambling over the Internet, a few companies have found ways to bring interactive wagering to racing fans. The You Bet Network of Los Angeles (www.youbet.com) has partnered with a licensed telephone-wagering operation to offer a form of interactive simulcasting that allows subscribers to download racing forms, see track odds, place bets and watch the races in real time on their computers. Payoffs are equal to those given at the tracks, and

ROBERT MYERS

some of the country's premiere venues for Thoroughbred and harness racing are involved, including the Meadowlands and Hialeah Park. Other companies exploring this new turf are Interbets (www.interbets.com) and Capital OTB (www.capitalotb.com). They still require bets to be phoned in, but Interbets offers its customers personal wagering terminals that connect via phone line. Many tracks around the country also Webcast races in both video and audio. For a list of those, as well as about 3000 other racing-related links, consult Your Mining Company Guide to Horse Racing at horseracing.miningco.com/mlibrary.htm. —JOHN WINTERS

SEGA: THE NEXT GENERATION

Sony's PlayStation has been winning the latest battles for gamers' hearts (and dollars), but the video game wars are far from over. Sega has already spilled the news of its next-generation game system, Dreamcast, though this tech toy won't be ready for U.S. consumption until next fall. Developed in cooperation with Hitachi, Microsoft, NEC, VideoLogic and Yamaha, Dreamcast has 128-bit processing power that moves graphics data four times faster than the most powerful Pentium II computer chip. As a result, pictures look supersmooth and three-dimensional. A dedicated 64-channel audio chip promises sound performance worthy of fine home theater equipment. But even more impressive is Dreamcast's ability to deliver multiplayer online gaming, currently an advantage enjoyed exclusively by PC users. Another smart touch: Dreamcast's Visual Memory System includes a memory card with its own LCD screen that doubles as a stand-alone portable system. Gamers can use VMS to set up plays in sports games, for example, and then download the strategy by plugging the card into the Dreamcast control pad. VMS also saves special characters, moves or teams, and lets you trade game information by connecting two VMS cards.

—JONATHAN TAKIFF

VIRTUAL DISNEY

Disney pushes the limits of virtual reality technology at its new entertainment complex, DisneyQuest, in Orlando. The 100,000-square-foot attraction uses Silicon Graphics workstations to power rides in which visitors experience wild adventures in six animated worlds. A few of these virtual trips—Aladdin's Magic Carpet Ride, Hercules in the Underworld

BUC ROGERS

and the Virtual Jungle Cruise—sound adolescent. But Disney has gone grown-up on all of them by teaming its unparalleled animation with motion simulators—cars that buck and rock to create a more realistic sense of movement. Our favorite of the six attractions? Cyber-Space Mountain, a VR roller coaster ride with a simulator car that pitches and rolls 360 degrees. For those who prefer to avoid Orlando, DisneyQuest facilities will be opening in 30 cities, beginning with Chicago next summer.

—BETH TOMKIW

WILD THINGS

The average Joe owns 100 compact discs, according to Pioneer Electronics, and the company's new PD-F1007 301-disc Giga CD Changer (pictured) offers us Joes plenty of room for growth. But the machine won't consume your entertainment cabinet like some mega CD changers. Thanks to an efficiently designed center-loading mechanism, Pioneer's Gigo Changer has a footprint on par with typical rack components. It olso has smart features that make shuffling through all the music easier. Custom filing modes let you categorize music ten ways—say, by genre or personal preferences (yours, hers, etc.). The machine also has a Best Selection Memory function that lets you program your 50 favorite tracks for ployback in order or at random. Other cool features: CD text and title input (for scrolling through the inventory) and an audio link that lets you hook up an oddiional Giga CD Changer for a total storage capacity of 602 CDs. The price: $350. —B.T.

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WHO NEEDS REINDEER WHEN YOU HAVE A MOUSE?

playboy's guide to holiday shopping on the internet

At the risk of sounding like Scrooge, we think holiday shopping sucks. But it's not the pressure of picking out perfect gifts that drives us nuts. It's those Tickle-Me-Elmo crazies—pushing and yanking and complaining. Thankfully, there's the Internet. Armed with a PC, a modem line and a major credit card, you can cover everyone on your gift list—on your time and on your butt—without the crowds, rotten weather and other seasonal hassles. Sure, you will pay a little extra for doorstep delivery. But think of what you'll save in time and sanity. That said, here are a variety of spots with stuff that's bound to please.

SURE THINGS

If you prefer to go with what you know, ***Nordstrom*** (nordstrompta.com), ***Bloomingdale's*** (bloomingdales.com) and ***Neiman Marcus*** (www.neimanmarcus.com) have set up shop on the Web. Bloomie's is the only site that takes credit card information online (the others accept orders by fax or phone). But all offer the services of personal shoppers who communicate with you by e-mail, making gift recommendations or tracking down your requests. ***J. Crew*** (jcrew.com) lets you shop from its current catalogs as well as its sale and clearance ones. ***Eddie Bauer*** (www.eddiebauer.com) sells clothing, footwear, home furnishings, luggage and gift certificates that can be used at any of its stores. ***Gap Online*** (www.gap.com), which features a wide range of Gap merchandise, has a cool feature for the fashion impaired. Get Dressed Interactive lets you select a single garment—say, a shirt—and then offers suggestions for coordinates. If clothes aren't your bag, ***Barnes & Noble*** (barnesandnoble.com), ***Borders*** (borders.com) and ***Tower Records*** (www.towerrecords.com) have impressive Web sites loaded with entertainment for the eyes and ears. And for gizmos galore, an online version of the ***Sharper Image*** is at sharperimage.com.

MALL BROWSING

To limit your mousework, Yahoo has partnered with Visa to create the ***Visa Shopping Guide*** (shopguide.yahoo.com). This comprehensive directory will sort through cyberjunk to bring you the best (and most reliable) commerce sites on the Web. Its 26 product categories offer a quick link to vendors who sell exactly what you want and who, of course, accept Visa. ***iMall*** (www.imall.com) is a one-stop online shop that sells everything from electronics to gourmet grub. It also provides access to two great toy stores, ***FAO Schwarz*** and ***Red Rocket***. (If you still can't find that Spawn action figure your nephew craves, check out ***eToys*** at www1.etoys.com.) Searching for designer labels? The ***Fashionmall*** (fashionmall.com) hooks you up with styles by such top names as Jean-Paul Gaultier, Tommy Hilfiger and Giorgio Armani, as well as a collection of threads for the under-30 set. ***Playboy Online*** (www.playboy.com) makes cybershopping convenient with the Playboy Marketplace, a section that features ***Critics' Choice Video*** (for VHS and DVD movies), ***Amazon.com*** (for books and compact discs), ***Collectors' Choice Music*** (for classic tunes, imports and reissues on CD, audiocassette and, occasionally, LP), ***My-CD.com*** (for custom compact discs) and ***Beyond.com*** (for computer games and reference software). It also links to the ***Playboy Store*** for lingerie, adult videos and romantic gifts for couples. Other great spots for music and movies: ***CDNow*** (www.cdnow.com), ***K-Tel Express*** (www.ktel.com), ***Netflix*** (www.netflix.com), ***DVD Express*** (www.dvdexpress.com) and ***Laser's Edge*** (lasersedge.com), which stocks more than 4000 movies on laser disc that are priced to sell—fast.

Do it on the Web: Cyberbras and designer ties.

MISCELLANEOUS LOOT

Ties aren't the most original gifts, but you'll earn points if the ones you give are from the ***Lee Allison Co.*** (leeallison.com). If we had the bucks, we'd take one of each. The designer's cool retro styles include the E-mail, Bachelor Pad Upholstery, Dick Tracy and Pink Flamingos, pictured here, left to right. Exercise equipment tops plenty of holiday wish lists. At the ***FitnessZone*** (www.fitnesszone.com) you can choose among the best treadmills, stair machines, exercise bikes, free weights and more. For a broader range of jock gear, browse the ***Sports Superstore*** (www.sportssuper.com) and ***Sportsite*** (sportsite.com). If your girlfriend has a great sense of humor, order her a custom Cyberbra (pictured left) from ***Fox Color & Light's Home Page*** (www.cyberthings.com). This leather work of art is covered with tiny red lightbulbs that strobe in funky patterns. Prefer to light up her taste buds? You can find all sorts of tempting treats at ***Dean & Deluca*** (www.dean-deluca.com). More than 100 brands of cigars, pipes and tobacco accessories are available at ***SJI Tobacco*** (208.147.229.175/body.cfm). ***Virtual Vineyards*** (www.virtualvin.com) offers an equally vast selection of wines from around the world, along with gourmet meats, cheeses and confections. (We especially like the wine samplers.) To send a loved one to an actual vineyard, visit ***Travelocity*** (www.travelocity.com) or ***Expedia*** (expedia.msn.com) to book a trip to Europe or Napa Valley.

—BETH TOMKIW

CYBERSCOOP

Here are a few tips from Visa on how to play it safe with your plastic while online.

Use a secure browser, such as Netscape 2.0 (or higher), Microsoft Explorer or AOL.

Stay with sites that promise secure transactions. They'll have a Lock and Key logo, plus explanations about one of two technologies—either Security Socket Layer or Secure Electronic Transactions.

Be sure to report any unouthorized use of your card within 48 hours of receiving your monthly statement. All major credit card companies obide by the Fair Credit Billing Act, a law that protects ogainst froudulent use of plastic by making cardholders liable for a maximum $50 of unapproved charges.

See what's happening on Playboy's Home Page at http://www.playboy.com.

WHERE & HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 195.

Makes a great gift.

On the other hand, you've been very, very good this year.

The Bose® Wave® radio is the perfect gift for your favorite music lover. But listen to it once, and you may not want to give it away. After all, the Wave radio can fill any home this holiday season with amazingly big, full stereo sound. And yet it's small enough to fit on an end table, on a kitchen counter—just about anywhere.

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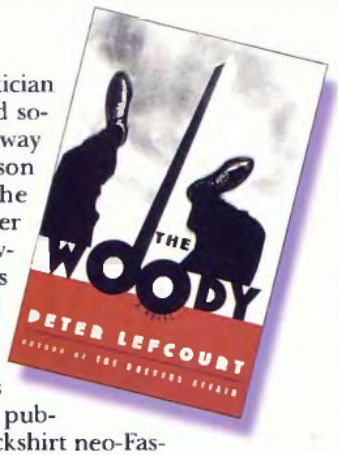


How many scandals can one politician shake off? Bill Clinton should find solace (and some suggestions) in the way Vermont Senator Woodrow Wilson White meets his adversities. The bloodied but unbowed hero of Peter Lefcourt's wickedly satiric new novel ***The Woody*** (Simon & Schuster) is facing an election with more than a few problem areas. His son is a dope dealer, his daughter is a practicing Luddite and his wife is a lesbian who is threatening to go public. His male housekeeper is a Blackshirt neo-Fascist. And his largest campaign contributor is the head of organized crime in his home state. Even worse, his Republican opponent is so relentless that she makes Kenneth Starr seem as good-natured as Ringo Starr. Still, the main thing on Woody's mind is not the election but his erection. His urologist's nurse is leaking news of his dipping testosterone level, and, as his campaign guru notes, "Nobody wants a senator who's down a quart." How could the Los Angeles–based Lefcourt concoct such a hilarious insider's tour of Beltway wheeling and dealing, complete with smart pokes at pols from Trent Lott to Ted Kennedy? Woody might advise: Don't ask questions, just have fun.

—DICK LOCHTE

MAGNIFICENT OBSESSIONS

After nearly a year of Manica Lewinsky and the dismissal of oral sex as no sex at all, it's a relief to read Chranicle Baoks' ***Going Down: Lip Service From Great Writers.*** Some of the writers are literary—Oscar Wilde, Anaïs Nin, Norman Mailer, John Updike, Philip Rath and Harold Brodkey. Some—Erica Jong, Frank Zappa, Anka Radakovich—are just bawdy. Here's Nin an the subject: "As he was pinned under her, she was the ane to move within reach of his mouth, which had nat touched her yet. She remained a shart distance, loaking, enjaying the spectacle of her awn beautiful stomach and hair and sex so near his mauth." Cauntered by Mailer: "We grappled taward the bed, stealing handfuls of each ather's flesh en raute before diving dawn into the sang of the bedsprings, her mouth engarging my cock. There are a hundred wards, I suppase, far penis, but cock goes with fellatio." Then there is Frank Zappa's report on the Plaster-Casters: "The blaw jab girl had to take her mauth off the guy's dick at the precise mament the other girl slammed the cantainer full of glap anta the end af it, holding it there until it hardened enough to make a good mold. When Hendrix was cast, they tald me he liked the glap so well he fucked the mald." Anka Radakavich became so enamored of a cunnilinguist that she put a framed phata af his tongue an her desk at wark. In *Sex Tips for Straight Women From a Gay Man*, the author cancludes: "Perhaps yaur biggest concern about the world's best BJ is gagging. A lot of it has to da with your relaxatian level and haw comfartable yau feel. A lat has ta da with the cantral of yaur breathing. Remember that Mr. Stiffy is yaur friend."

PETER PALOMBI

DECK THE COFFEE TABLE

Nothing says the holidays like a fat coffee-table book loaded with fabulous pictures and interesting text. We're not talking doorstops. We're talking books that friends will delightedly scan while waiting for you to produce a four-star offering from chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten's ***Jean-Georges*** (Broadway Books). As we would expect, there's no shortage this year of gift books that celebrate anniversaries. ***Bruce Springsteen: Songs*** (Avon) chronicles his noteworthy 25-year recording career with photos, lyrics and a few well-chosen words from the Boss himself. ***What I'd Say: The Atlantic History of Music*** (Stewart, Tabori & Chang) covers 50 years of the Atlantic record label, from Ray Charles to Stone Temple Pilots, with lots of words from Atlantic founder Ahmet Ertegun and a few from the likes of Mick Jagger and Eric Clapton. There are also thoughtful essays by such critics as Greil Marcus and Robert Christgau and photos galore. ***NASA and the Exploration of Space*** (Stewart, Tabori & Chang) presents the history of the U.S. space program, covering all of the right, and some of the wrong, stuff from over the course of 40 years. The Man of Steel has been flying for 20 years longer than that, as you'll learn in ***Superman: The Complete History*** (Chronicle). Michael Jordan has produced more superheroic feats in a span of only 13 NBA seasons, and if you can't get enough of the guy who has better name recognition than Santa Claus, ***For the Love of the Game*** (Crown) aims for a repeat of *Rare Air*. Sports fans will also appreciate ***The Best American Sports Writing 1998*** (Houghton Mifflin), which has become an annual event since 1991. Bill Littlefield of National Public Radio is this year's guest editor. Some of the most acclaimed photographers in the world have worked for the Magnum Photos Agency, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a series of black-and-white compendiums on single themes. ***Night*** (Terrail) is photo noir at its finest, with 29 photographers represented. Other noteworthy photography books include ***Forms of Desire*** (St. Martin's), which explores underground erotica through the lens of Doris Kloster, and ***Airborne*** (Chronicle), a new collection from dance photographer Lois Greenfield. Although it won't bring much cheer to your household, ***Vietnam: Reflexes and Reflections*** (Abrams) is a fascinating collection of work from the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum, which began in Chicago before Air Jordan arrived there. A light-hearted but nonetheless revealing glimpse of a war's impact is presented in ***Design for Victory*** (Princeton Architectural Press), by William Bird Jr. and Harry Rubenstein. It's a curious anthology of World War II posters that were distributed on the American home front. Before you say it can't be done, take a look at Michael Walsh's novel ***As Time Goes By*** (Warner Books). Sure, others have attempted to reimagine *Casablanca*, but this one actually works. Can you picture Rick as a former gangster from East Harlem? Cheers!

—PAUL ENGLEMAN

ABBIE SENNETT

MEN

By ASA BABER

Picasso is OK, I can appreciate his work, but show me a motorcycle like the new MV Agusta F4 (designed by Massimo Tamburini) or the 1997 BMW R1200C or the 1911 Harley-Davidson Model 7D, and my eyes will shine and I will shout, "That's art!"

For the record, the Guggenheim Museum in New York City had an exhibit this past summer called "The Art of the Motorcycle." It featured 113 motorcycles (including those listed previously) and drew approximately 280,000 visitors (45 percent higher than is normal). The Guggenheim is doing the right thing, and I hope there is more where that came from.

I have this fantasy that I will win at Powerball one day, and after I pay my debts and go to Hawaii and help some of my family and friends, I will build the world's first Real Man's Art Museum. It will be a place designed specifically for regular guys untutored in the finer points of art as art critics define them, but who find great beauty in their everyday lives and want to celebrate that fact. I first thought of the Real Man's Art Museum years ago when I was a mover in the Midwest. As I hauled household effects from place to place, I frequently fell in love with well-made things. That was the highest privilege of the furniture mover's job: I had access to people's homes and got to see their most precious family heirlooms—many of which belonged in my museum.

Beer and hot dogs will be served at the Real Man's Art Museum and computer games will be situated on every floor. And on display—displays you can touch and handle, by the way—will be my favorite motorcycles as well as Louisville Slugger bats and Stanley hand tools and Hasselblad cameras and five-string banjos and bark canoes and hunting knives and Peterbilt trucks. It's time for us to stop being intimidated by traditional forms of art and to enjoy, without shame, the world around us as we see it. So given my plans, let me tell you about my latest art object. It's a blue-ribbon special and you can own it yourself.

Shortly before the end of the last century (in 1895, to be exact), a man named King Camp Gillette began to work on an idea for a safety razor with disposable blades. The conventional straight razor then in use was a dangerous and awkward instrument in the hands of many

STEVE BOSNICK

ME AND MY MACH3

men, and the need for a better and safer way to shave was obvious. Or at least it was obvious to K.C. Gillette. By 1901 Gillette had finalized his conception for his safety razor, and in 1903 he manufactured his version of what would become a long line of shaving products. The days of grisly shaving accidents with straight-blade razors were over.

Gillette's 1903 start-up efforts did not bring immediate success. By year's end, he had sold only 51 razor sets and 168 blades. But by 1904, Gillette received the first U.S. patent on his safety razor, and sales jumped to 90,000 razors and 12 million blades.

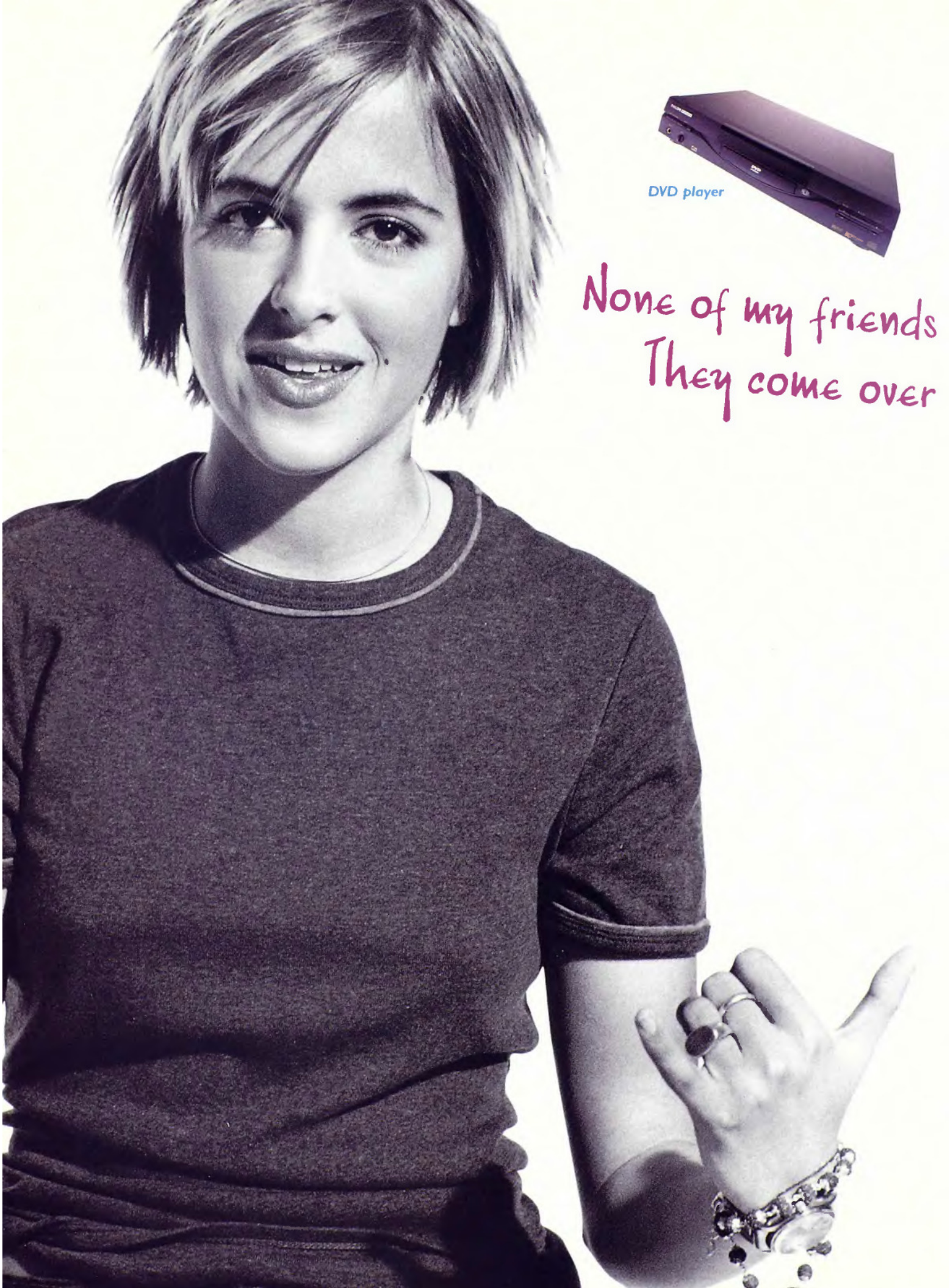
In 1932 the Gillette Blue Blade came on the market. In 1938 the Gillette Thin Blade arrived, and the year 1946 saw the first blade dispenser, which eliminated the need to unwrap individual blades (often a finger-cutting exercise). In 1957 Gillette introduced the adjustable razor, and in 1960 the company produced the Super Blue Blade, which featured a silicone coating on the blade's edge. In 1971 Gillette presented the first twin-blade razor (the Trac II), followed by the first twin-blade disposable razor in 1976, the Atra in 1977, the Sensor in 1989 and the SensorExcel in 1994.

Here in this year of our beard 1998 comes the latest in a long line of breakthroughs in shaving essentials. I'm talking about the Gillette Mach3 razor (available in most stores for about $7, with a four-pack of cartridges that sells for $6.50). The Mach3 is the finest razor I have ever used. It has given me the first truly close shave of my life, and I urge you to try it. (And no, I am not on retainer to Gillette and will not receive any perks for my praise of the Mach3.)

The Mach3 was tested by more than 10,000 men before it went to stores. Curiosity about the Mach3 was supposedly so high that the FBI investigated alleged leaks of information to Gillette's competitors. The Gillette Co. spent more than $750 million to bring the Mach3 to market, and its new shaving system will be covered by more than 35 patents. A few of the features that make the Mach3 an exceptional item:

- There are three blades in each cartridge head, set up in what Gillette calls "progressive alignment," which means that in one shaving stroke you get a consistently cleaner cut. I find the three-blade alignment a definite improvement over two-blade cartridges.
- The blade edges are thinner than any other Gillette blade edges, which means they provide less drag and a finer shave. Gillette says this system is "the first major blade innovation in 30 years," and I believe it. However, the new blades don't seem to last long. I can get only about four or five really good shaves out of one cartridge. If you have a tough beard, you'll probably spend more on blades for this razor.
- The pivoting action is housed in the cartridge rather than in the blade handle. That keeps the blade surfaces closer to your face and makes the razor easy to use.
- The ergonomic metal handle with its crescent-shaped grip fits into your hand easily and helps you shave efficiently. And its design seems simple in the most classical sense of that word. I just like looking at the Mach3.

Which is why, on the first floor of my Real Man's Art Museum, there will be a sealed case under a spotlight that holds the Gillette Mach3 in all its glory. Because, by any sane man's definition, it, too, is a thing of beauty. Thanks to King Gillette and the gift he gave us more than a century ago.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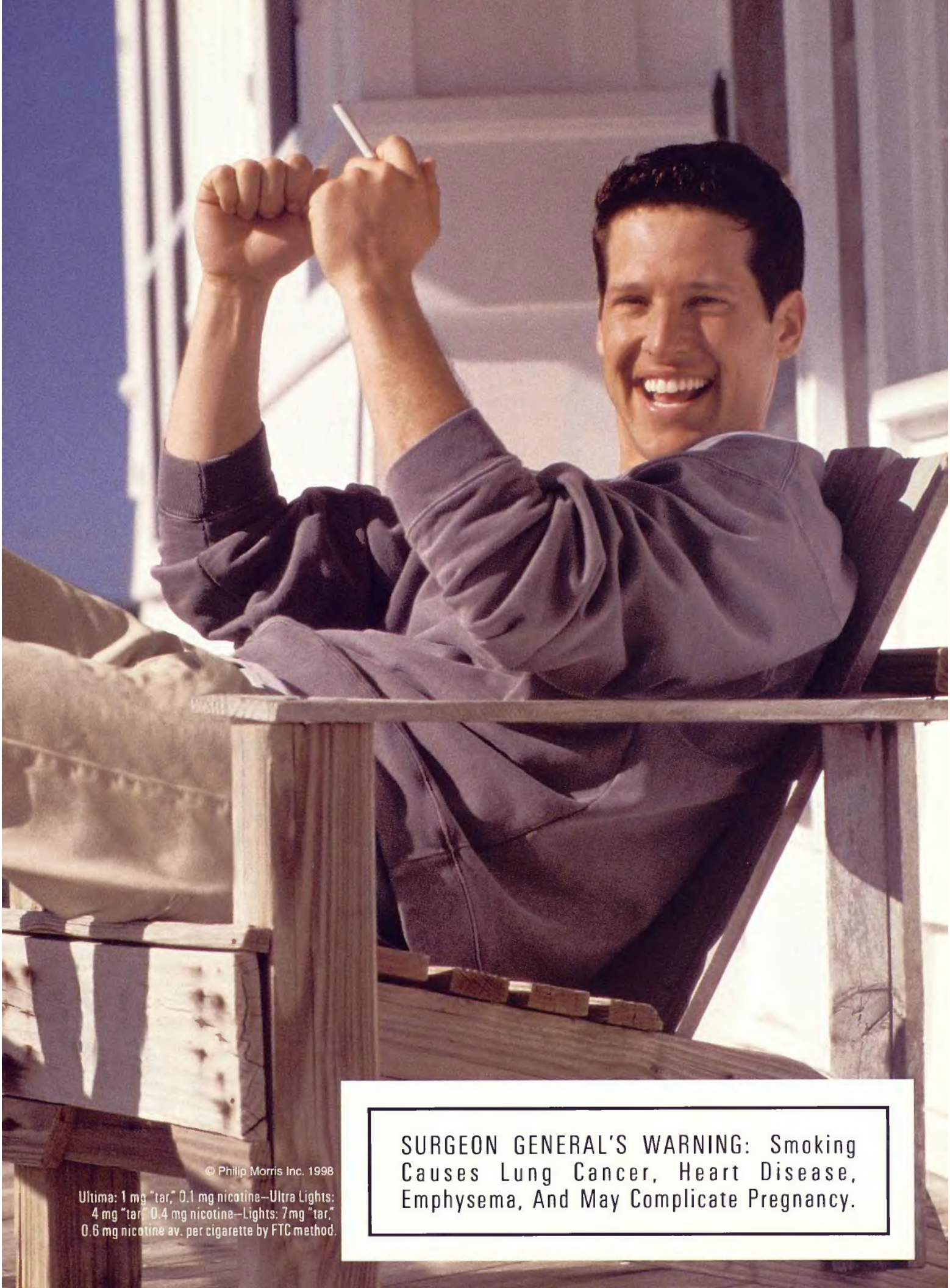

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"Boy, I wish I had that on tape." How many times we've wished it! The solution is now miniaturized right into a standard telephone handset. Just click out your present handset, and replace it with the Record-A-Call. You get crystal-clear recording, even on multiple lines. With no extra gear. Record shaky deals, critical instructions, promises from your broker, advice from doctors, or just the voices of far-off loved ones. Plus, unlike digital recorders, you can take the micro-tape with you. Records up to 3 hours on a single microcassette, without annoying beeps. Hooks to most any phone. Takes 2 AA batteries, included.

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With other windproof lighters, in bright sunlight it's hard to tell if the flame's on. The Iron Eagle solves that. Click the ignition. First, the flame is a vivid crimson. Second, fire it up and the glass porthole glows white to orange. You know it's working even in the brightest light. Curved, low profile design rides lump-free in your pocket. Adjustable flame, will fuse metal or light up your smoke. Butane available anywhere. Great price!

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Never before have the best BAK-4 lanthanum prisms (used in $600 Zeiss units) been incorporated into such a compact binocular. Slip them from your pocket or the included case. Crystal-clear 10 x 25 power instantly brings far-off details startlingly close. And unlike ordinary binoculars, which get hazy over time, new SportTechs have *15-layer* genuine ruby-coated lenses. IR haze and UV glare are *nullified*, with zero eye fatigue. Most incredibly, they measure just 3" x 3" x 1.4"! Rubber finish armors against dust, moisture, shock, or abuse. Enjoy vivid front-row scenes anywhere, and leave your clunky old-fashioned binoculars at home.

1X

10X

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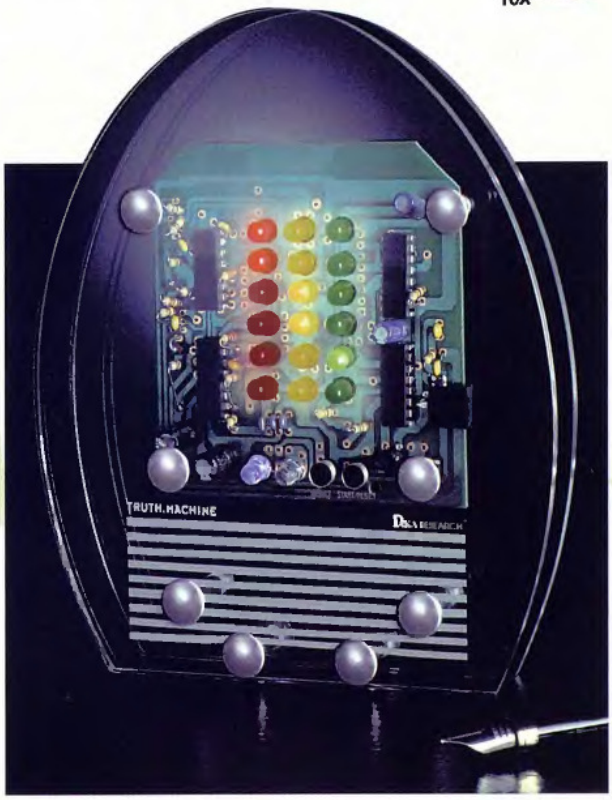
Car dealer honest about your repair bill? Babysitter trustworthy? Truth seekers throughout the years have developed many methods to gauge a person's guilt or innocence. In the 1970s, the military sponsored research to develop covert lie detection, using voice and psychological stress analysis. Now Daka Research has incorporated these theories into the new Truth Machine™. As someone speaks, check out the bank of glowing LED barlights. The degree of detected tension runs from green (low) to yellow (medium) to red (high). Although no machine can absolutely tell truth from fiction, this astonishing marvel is fascinating to watch as you engage in conversations. (Great at a party – you'll be surprised at the confessions you'll hear just having the Truth Machine there!) Even test it on phone conversations, recorded voices, or newscasters and politicians on TV or the radio! Takes one 9V battery, not included. Built-in mic and phone connector. Adjusts for sensitivity. Measures just 6" x 5" x 1", so you can test for lies anywhere!

■ **The Truth Machine™, #TM-10 $59.95**

No machine is a conclusive lie-detector. Do not use the Truth Machine to make personal or business decisions without independent verification. Sold as a novelty only.



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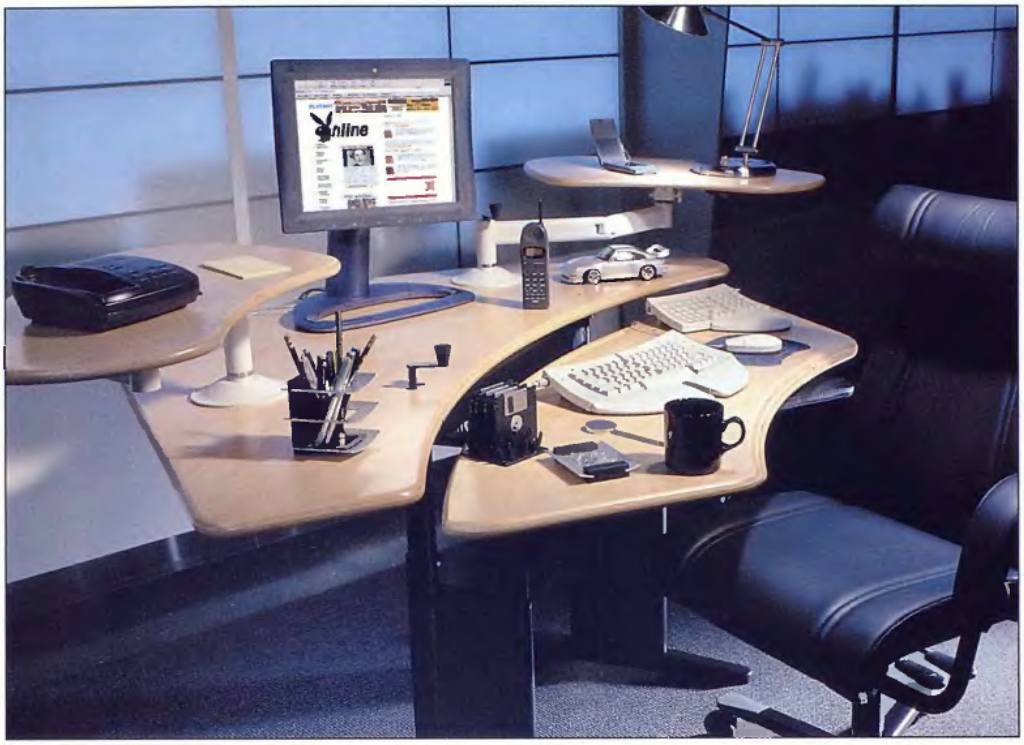
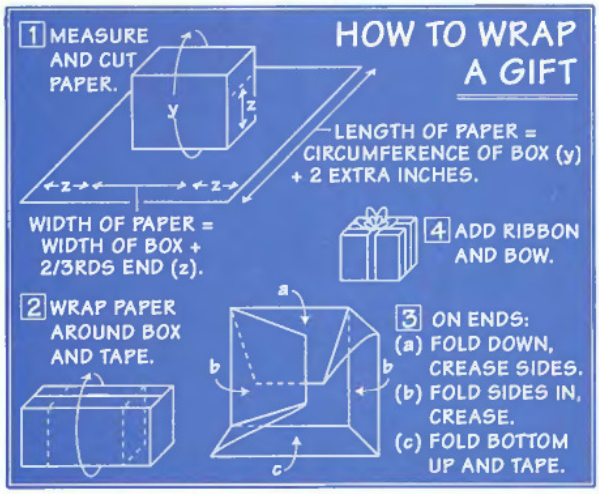
The Ultimate Computer Desk

Computer technology hos been progressing ot worp speed over the past decode. And while mony of us are on our third or fourth computer, thot cutting-edge model still sits on a desk thot keeps us hunched over and cromped for spoce. The Biomorph Interoctive Desk is designed to accommodote serious computer equipment in a way that enhonces its use. With o simple hond cronk you con odjust the position of the bock surfoce (which con hold o lorge monitor) or the keyboard surfoce. Shelves with orticuloting orms move important equipment closer as the need arises. The desk pictured here is obout $1500. The articulating orms ore $500 eoch.



The Right Presentation

It is not enough to get your girlfriend a present. You hove to moke the extro effort so it looks, well, presentoble. You con cheot ond osk the store to wrop it for you, but then it will hove thot monufoctured look. Besides, no motter whot the finished product looks like, your sincere ottempt to wrap the gift is more importont thon the oppeorance of the package. Follow the directions below. And as long as you're going to oll the trouble, spend money on ottroctive poper of a good weight. Avoid preossembled bows. A flawed but earnest bow beots a store-bought perfect one.


HOW TO WRAP A GIFT
1 MEASURE AND CUT PAPER.
y
z
LENGTH OF PAPER = CIRCUMFERENCE OF BOX (y) + 2 EXTRA INCHES.
WIDTH OF PAPER = WIDTH OF BOX + 2/3RDS END (z).
4 ADD RIBBON AND BOW.
2 WRAP PAPER AROUND BOX AND TAPE.
3 ON ENDS:
(a) FOLD DOWN, CREASE SIDES.
(b) FOLD SIDES IN, CREASE.
(c) FOLD BOTTOM UP AND TAPE.
a
b
c

How to Cook Your Christmas Goose

Serving the holidoy goose is probobly the most festive Christmos trodition to come out of the kitchen. It isn't porticulorly hord to do, and the preporation makes the kitchen o locus of activity ond good cheer. Fill the cavity of the bird with your fovorite fruit-bosed stuffing, then truss the goose. Rub the skin with coorse solt and prick it oll over to ollow the fot to droin during cooking. Ploce the breost on o roosting rock in o shallow pon into which you hove poured a cup or so of woter. Ploce the goose in on oven preheoted to 425 degrees. Roost 15 minutes per pound (o 12-pound goose will toke approximately 3¼ hours). Boste the bird every 15 or 20 minutes. If the woter in the pon evoporotes, odd more. Skim the occumuloted fot from the pon every hour or so—there will be o lot of it. After the first hour, turn the bird over every holf hour, leoving it on its back for the lost 45 minutes to ollow the breost to brown. The goose is done when its legs move freely up ond down ond the juices from between its thigh ond its leg run cleor. Let the bird rest out of the oven for ot leost holf on hour before corving.

Variety is the spice of life.

Those who appreciate quality enjoy it responsibly.

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MANTRACK

Somewhere East of Suez

I Colaniali toiletries would have been right at home in the bathroom of Joseph Conrad's Lord Jim. The line, developed by J&E Atkinsons (perfumers in London since 1799), draws inspiration from the English colonies. Exotic ingredients such as mango-kernel oil and hamamelis extract are packaged in elegant pottery, glass and metal containers, and the result has the scent and look of the tropics. (The shaving cream with mango oil in an earthen pot is terrific.) Prices range from $16 for a deodorant stick with aubaku extract to $40 for an aromatic splash infused with guajaco wood. Saks Fifth Avenue and some Bloomingdale's and Nordstrom stores sell I Colaniali, or call 800-711-4880.

Clothesline: Conan O'Brien

During his comedy writing days, Conan O'Brien was strictly a jeans, sneakers and polo shirt kind of guy. Then came his late-night talk show on NBC. Now the six-foot-four star sports designer suits instead of schleppwear. "I like Paul Smith a lot, because he makes thin, tapered trousers, great for my long legs," says O'Brien. He also likes Donna Karan and Calvin Klein. "And colored English shirts—rich blues and velvets." His favorite clothing items? "The ones that hide my nude body. It's shocking," he says. "I have a leather jacket I bought a few years ago because I thought it made me look like Serpico. Actually, I look like Opie Taylor trying to look like Serpico. But I'm always thinking I need another cool jacket. I buy too many of them." As for shopping, he sticks to New York mainstays such as Calvin Klein and Barneys. "They're expensive, but they always have nice stuff." Like velvet shirts? "I was just kidding about the velvet shirts." Whatever you say, Austin Powers.

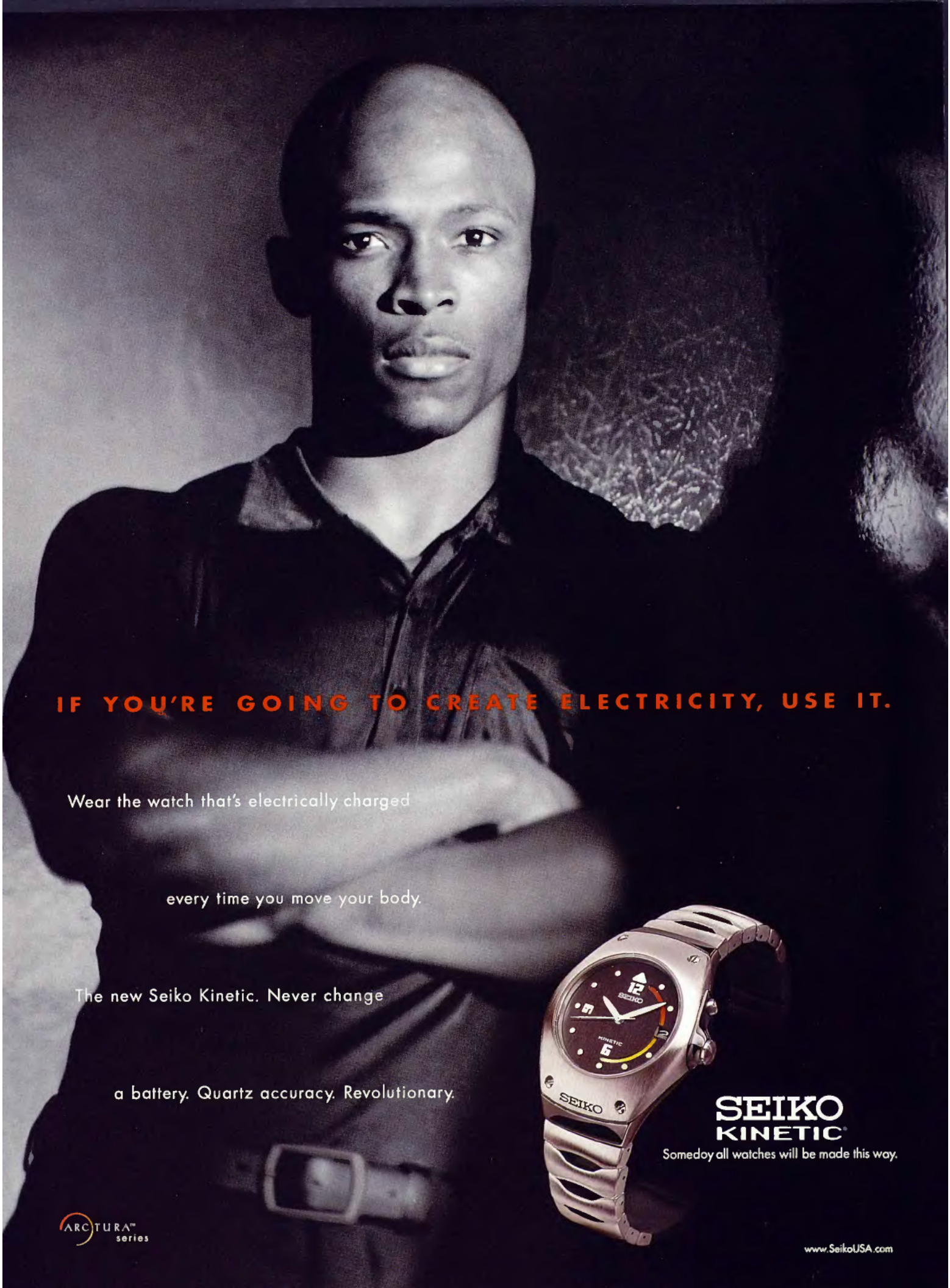
Guys Are Talking About . . .

Poker. It's replacing bowling as a weekend way to party and pair up. *Chuck Zito.* He's the stuntman and celebrities' bodyguard who kicked Jean-Claude Van Damme's ass following a disagreement at Scores, the strip club in New York. *Classic woodies.* Vintage wood-sided station wagons are becoming hot collectibles, with prices for rare cherry or restored models reaching upwards of $70,000. The *bellini.* As it is usually made, it contains champagne and the hand-squeezed juice of a white peach. But now the drink is so hot that we've seen bellini vending machines in busy clubs. *Pocket Mail.* With JVC's portable device for accessing and sending e-mail and pages from anywhere there's a paging network, no cables or wires are required. *Round-the-clock restaurants.* Global markets and greed have encouraged extended hours at a number of upscale eateries, including the French bistro Florent on Gansevoort Street in Manhattan's meatpacking district. The *Life Hammer* (pictured here). In the event of an accident, this $30 German-made gadget can crack a car's side window or cut a seat belt and possibly save your life. It's good for starting conversations, too. The price includes a mountable housing bracket for the Life Hammer.

Want Sex? Stuff Her Stocking

Who says you can't buy love? Even nonmaterial girls will melt at the sight of a gift that rocks. The first choice, of course, is lingerie. Unless your girlfriend is Nina Hartley, however, don't give her lingerie that's crotchless or buttless. Our choice is the sexy Ravage bra ($144) and thong ($68) pictured here, from Enchanté in Chicago. The company ships overnight. Motorola's new analog wireless phone that's nestled in the lingerie isn't an accessory for Barbie. Weighing 2.7 ounces and measuring only 3¼ inches (closed), the V3620 ($700) is the world's smallest and lightest phone. The Behind the Bedroom Door video series is erotic adult education at its best. It features couples talking about sex in real-life situations and demonstrating how they go far the gold. A set of four videos is $65. Fuji Film's slick Endeavor 3500ix Zoom MRC is an advanced photo system camera that's not much larger than a credit card. It features a remote control that makes taking between-the-sheets shots easy. The price: about $500. In the right hands—including yours—the $45 Hitachi Magic Wand, the classic two-speed vibrator with a soft head, is the best bedroom toy on the market.

WHERE & HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 195.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THE PLAYBOY ADVISOR

What should I offer my postal carrier, my doorman and the nanny as holiday tips?—R.W., Santa Monica, California

Give until you think. Maybe this is too much. Anyone who is dependable and competent deserves every penny, and there's no telling how a generous tip will influence your quality of life. The precise amount is left to your discretion, depending on circumstances (e.g., if you tip your doorman throughout the year, your gift can be adjusted somewhat). Here are some guidelines: Give live-in supers and doormen you interact with often $25 to $75; doormen you see infrequently, $10 to $25; doormen who tell your crazy ex-girlfriend that you moved out months ago, $250; housekeeper, $50; housekeeper if you're a bachelor, $300; newspaper carrier, $10 to $20; custodian who carried your Christmas party empties to the Dumpster, $25 to $50; mail carrier who doesn't steal your PLAYBOYS, *$10 to $20 (or a small gift and a letter of appreciation to his or her supervisor; it's against regulations for carriers to accept cash); garage attendants, $10 to $20; regular babysitter, $50; live-in nanny, a month's salary and a personal gift; advice columnist, a detailed letter describing your hottest sexual encounter, but with no question at the end.*

My wife has taken to calling me her "vibrator holder." I think she may be kidding, but I can't tell. Should I be offended?—P.W., Milwaukee, Wisconsin

That depends on when you're holding it. If your wife considers you a vibrator attachment, that's a problem. If you can touch her vibrator only when it's unplugged, you're in trouble. If you're in the next room cleaning her vibrator while she fucks the neighbor, call a professional. However, if she's saying in a slightly awkward way that her vibrator feels best under your control, you're ahead of the game. Ask for specifics: Would she prefer a holder or a handler? As Joani Blank points out in "Good Vibrations: The Complete Guide to Vibrators" (800-289-8423), it's difficult for even the most diligent lover to please a woman with a vibrator as well as she can herself. That's why some women enjoy having their partners hold the vibrator still while they move against it. Or they take the reins as they near orgasm to ensure optimum pleasure. Since vibrators are unisex, perhaps your wife could demonstrate her holding and handling techniques on your body. There's nothing more wonderful than two vibrator holders in love.

A friend presented this puzzle at the bar the other night, and it led to a contentious debate: "You're on a game show and are offered three doors. Behind one door is a Playmate, behind the second is a corn dog and behind the third is another corn dog. The host asks you to select a door, which remains closed. The host then says, "I'll show you one of the corn dogs" and opens a door you didn't choose. He asks, "Now that you've seen one of the corn dogs, would you like to switch your choice to the other closed door?" My friend insisted that switching doubles your chances of picking the Playmate. He tried to explain but made no sense. What door would the Advisor choose?—K.A., Tuscaloosa, Alabama

We'd say loudly, "Oh, hello, Hef!" and the Playmate would open the door herself. This puzzle has caused a furious debate on the Internet since certified genius Marilyn vos Savant offered a solution in 1990 in her newspaper column. She says you should switch. She's right. Here's our attempt at an explanation: Before you choose, there's a one-in-three chance that you'll select the door with the Playmate, and a two-in-three chance that she's behind one of the other doors. With us so far? The host always opens one of the doors that hides a corn dog. The odds are still one-in-three that you chose the door with the Playmate, and two-in-three that she was behind one of the other doors. But now one of those doors has been opened, and the Playmate isn't there. So the two-in-three odds apply to the other closed door, and you double your chances if you switch. (The intuitive response is that the two closed doors each have a 50–50 chance. That would be the case if you were initially offered two doors.) Computer simulations bear this out: Over time, switchers win two thirds of the time. For more analysis (and debate), visit "The Monty Hall Dilemma" at cut-the-knot.com/hall.html.

I'm 48, my wife is 43, and this is the third marriage for both of us. We each have had our share of relationships. During a drunken moment, however, she told me that between her first divorce, in 1972, and her second marriage, in 1980, she slept with more than 400 guys, mostly one-night stands. I find this incredible and am having a hard time dealing with it. Any suggestions?—R.J., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

In the movie "Chasing Amy" (see page 150 for a profile of its director, Kevin Smith), the protagonist discovers his new girlfriend has a ton of sexual experience, including—gasp!—a threesome. He freaks out. Our reaction: Who cares? That's our response to your letter, as well. Besides the obvious double standard at work here (women who have lots of sex are sluts; guys who do so are studs), your wife's encounters happened two decades ago at a time when she was newly divorced, living in a pre-AIDS disco culture and hoping to meet a guy like you. She had divorced young, and it was time to party. A new partner each week is an active, if not fulfilling, sex life. Be thankful you weren't one of those quickies, and that you two met long after your wife's wanderlust had been satisfied. Don't expect her to express regret now, or beg your forgiveness or any such bullshit. Being jealous of ex-lovers is pointless. Frankly, we'd love to share a bed with a woman who has that much experience. She knows what she likes, she knows what guys like, and no doubt she has great stories. Some of them might even turn you on.

You wrote in October that Altoids don't do much to enhance oral sex. The day after reading your response, I read in the Starr report that Monica Lewinsky had shown the president what was probably the Net posting you mentioned—while she was sucking on an Altoid! Small world. I had one girlfriend who would pop a cough drop into her mouth before giving me head, and it felt great. What's the difference?—J.C., Orlando, Florida

Did it help her gag reflex? Cough drops contain menthol. When you blow on menthol placed on the skin, it creates the sensation of warmth. When you inhale forcefully, it creates a cooling sensation. Minty liqueurs such as crème de menthe have the same effect, though the feeling can be more intense. Use caution: Applying menthol too liberally can burn. At first it feels wonderful, but ten minutes later you'll be scrambling for a wet washcloth. That wouldn't be discreet. As for Altoids, the president obviously read our response as well, because he was able to resist Monica in that instance despite her minty breath.

I collect neckties from the Thirties and Forties. Finding a tie from that era that breaks at or just above the belt is damn near impossible, especially if you want

ILLUSTRATION BY ISTVAN BANYAI

to keep the two lengths equal. Any suggestions?—C.E., Winston-Salem, North Carolina

The short, wide, somber ties of the Thirties complemented the vests and high-button suits popular at the time (and now making a comeback). Many men also wore suspenders, which hiked up their trousers. As you know, neckwear in the Forties was thinner, longer and more decorative, especially after the war. Ron Spark, co-author of "Fit to Be Tied" and the owner of 3500 classic ties, works around your problem by tucking the short length between the first and second buttons of his shirt. You also may use a tie bar, which became a common accessory in the Forties.

When is the proper time to eat the olive in your martini?—M.M., Denver, Colorado

When you hear its tiny voice calling to you. There's no proper time, but Gary Regan, co-author of "The Martini Companion," recommends waiting until you finish your drink. "Otherwise you have to stick your fingers into the martini, and you might spill some of it," he says. (Toothpicks are out, by the way.) Connoisseurs who prefer very dry martinis marinate their olives in vermouth for months, and they always add the garnish after the drink has been poured. How many olives? Regan says to go with an odd number but says three is too many (which leaves one—these martini guys love formulas). Another guide offers this rule: One is elegant, two is proper and three is a meal.

Your response in June to a reader's request for advice concerning his cheating girlfriend sounded as if it were written by a member of the Berkeley chapter of NOW. I am reminded of a letter in Nancy Friday's book *My Secret Garden* in which a cheating wife claims she was busy rebuilding her husband's shattered ego, as if the problem was his delicate ego and not her behavior. Your advice that the guy end his relationship is sound, but I hope your purpose was to shake him up and end his self-pity. Does being reluctant to trust a partner after a betrayal make you a control freak? His girlfriend ruined not only the relationship but also a friendship. A more relevant question than "Do you read her mail?" would have been "Do you screw her friends too?"—P.H., Arlington, Texas

Struck a nerve, did we? We'll stand by our advice. The reader was a control freak by his own admission (he even attempted to dictate our response). What sort of wonderful relationship did this woman "ruin" when the guy's reaction to her cheating was to order her to heel like a dog? She didn't betray the relationship—she was running from it.

I've seen newspaper ads placed by religious groups that claim gay people can become straight if they put their minds to it. I thought it was well established that sexual preference lies in our genes. Is there something I don't know, or can gays change?—R.T., Toledo, Ohio

Consider the implications of the idea that our sexual orientation operates like a light switch. You could make yourself gay! Take another look at this month's Playmate and think about the powerful attraction you have to women. You can't walk down the street without feeling drawn to every other female who passes, right? Now imagine eliminating that desire and replacing it with an equally powerful longing for guys. It would be easier to change your gender. The ad campaign was funded by conservative Christian groups that believe homosexuality is caused by inadequate parenting and can be overcome through willpower (imagine what they could do for dieters). Although the effort to identify a gay gene continues, five decades of clinical research indicates that being straight or gay is about as much a choice as handedness or eye color (read "A Separate Creation: The Search for the Biological Origins of Sexual Orientation," by Chandler Burr). If behavior defines homosexuality, every guy who dresses in drag or enjoys anal penetration is gay. That's far from the case. As usual, a few sheltered souls have reduced a complex equation to a missionary position.

I have a long-distance relationship with my first serious girlfriend. During my last weekend visit, I wanted to do something romantic. I bought her an expensive dinner, then handed her a card that contained a hotel key. Inside the room, I had rose petals leading to the bed, champagne on ice, strawberries in the refrigerator and a change of clothes in the closet for her to wear the next morning. This took a month to put together. Her reaction wasn't negative, but she was not as appreciative as I had hoped. I have come to realize that she will never be as committed or as thoughtful to me as I am to her. I don't know what to do. I want to remain friends, but I also want her to understand what I am going through. I need some advice on how to proceed.—M.E., Fort Wayne, Indiana

You're coming on too strong ("Look what I've done for you. Love me!"), and our guess is that your girlfriend is burdened with your efforts to woo her. Schedule a heart-to-heart, but don't be surprised if she's ready to move on. You may be too.

Years ago I read an article in PLAYBOY about handheld showerheads, and I bought one called the Wizard for some erotic fun with my girlfriends. It sure has been a wizard at getting women off. I mounted it on a flexible hose and have been rewarded with more fun and excitement than you can imagine. There's something to be said about the gentle persistence of a stream of warm water. The unit has a knob that allows you to adjust the pressure from "fire hose" to fine mist. After all these years it has started to leak. Do you know where I might find another?—D.S., Baltimore, Maryland

We featured five water massagers in a February 1979 article called "Shower Power." Little did we know we would change your bathroom into an Orgasmatron. Sadly, we couldn't track down the Wizard. But water massagers are more popular than ever, and there is a variety of models available (the Relaxa Plus from Grohe deserves a look if only because of its motto: Shower With Pleasure). The next best thing to the Wizard may be the Watersports shower attachment available from Renaissance Discovery (888-736-0055, or sexhealth.org). The attachment consists of a six-foot flexible steel hose and a water pressure regulator, along with one of two plastic heads: The first model directs the water through seven holes along a tapered tip, the second resembles a miniature metal showerhead. (A "fire hose" version was discontinued because of complaints it was too powerful.) If you're serious about good clean fun, check out the Fontaine shower massage unit at www.showershop.com. We got steamy just looking at it.

My girlfriend has always been hesitant to have sex doggie style because she finds it impersonal. How can I convince her?—R.W., Buffalo, New York

Doggie style can be impersonal if you don't let your hands wander. It also can be highly arousing for a woman because it allows the guy to stimulate her G-spot and rub her back at the same time. Try this: Sit on a chair and ask your girlfriend to lower herself onto your erection while facing away from you (if necessary, scoot your butt forward on the seat). She can place her hands on your thighs to balance herself. In this position, she can control the depth, speed and direction of your cock without placing pressure on your pelvis or thighs. (It resembles a blow job—wet, warm and weightless.) Meanwhile, you can keep it personal by reaching around her body and fondling her clitoris and breasts. You also can kiss her back and neck, whisper dirty nothings or play with her ass. We call it the front-row fuck. Why? Because you're sharing the best seat in the house.

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereo and sports cars to dating dilemmas, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The most provocative, pertinent questions will be presented in these pages each month. Write the Playboy Advisor, PLAYBOY, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or advisor@playboy.com (because of volume, we cannot respond to all e-mail inquiries). Look for responses to our most frequently asked questions at www.playboy.com/faq, and check out the Advisor's latest collection of sex tricks, "365 Ways to Improve Your Sex Life" (Plume), available in bookstores or by phoning 800-423-9494.

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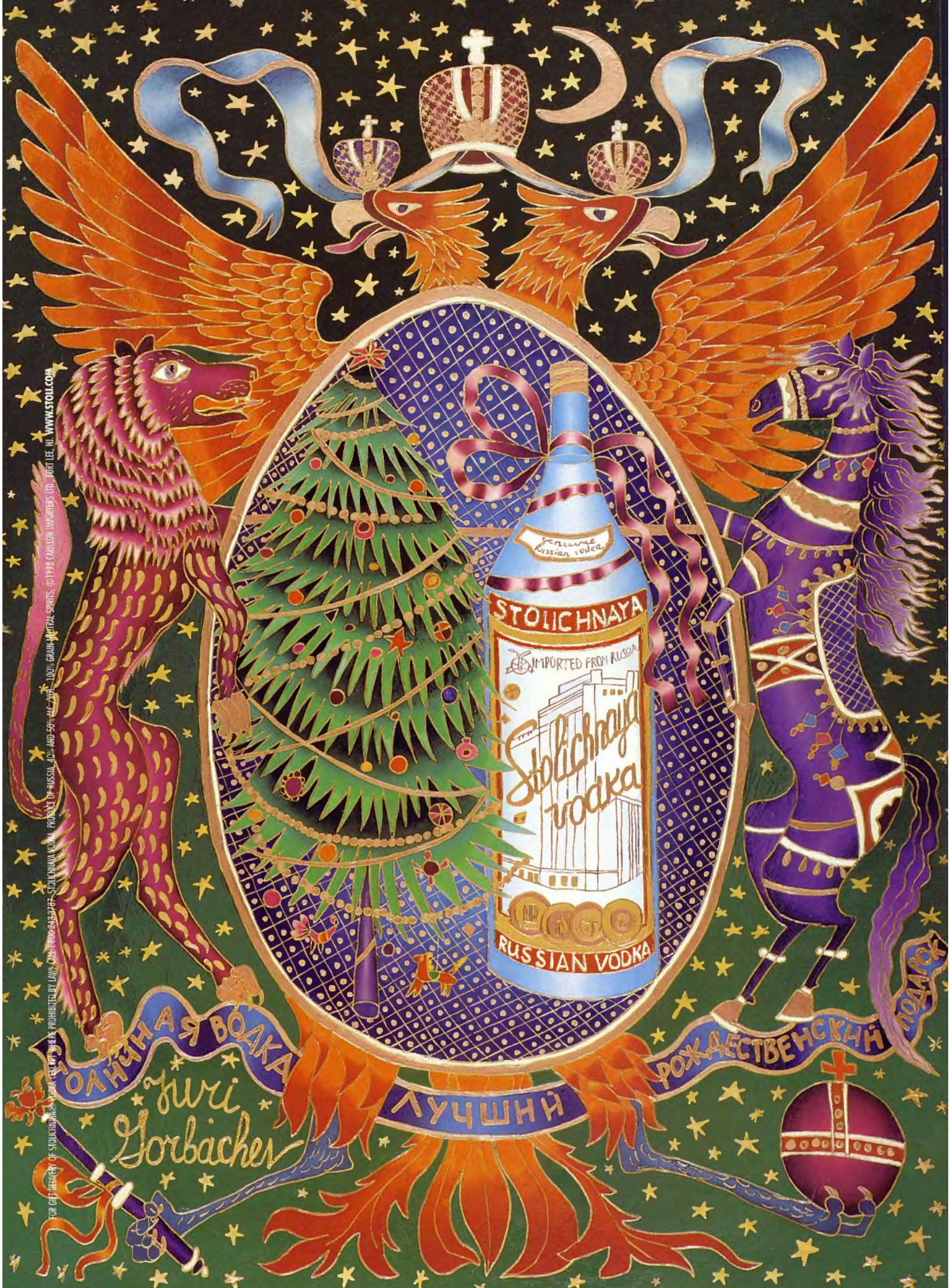
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LEAKING DATA

how function creep threatens your privacy

By MARK FRAUENFELDER

In 1935, when the U.S. government began its Social Security program, the nine-digit number assigned to each taxpayer seemed innocent enough. Today, citizens are asked to provide the number not only to claim benefits but to obtain a tax refund, health insurance, credit and, soon, a driver's license.

The transformation of the Social Security number into a de facto national ID is an example of function creep. Collected for one purpose, data are eventually used for another. Information is confidential only until the government decides it's not. Here are some examples of how function creep works:

Automated Toll Collection

It's a wonderful convenience. Rather than fumble for change at a toll booth, you fly by. A sensor scans a marker on the windshield or detects a device under your dash. The date, time and vehicle owner's name are recorded in a database. A bill arrives in the mail each month.

JANE E. FISHER

The existence of all that data has tempted police and prosecutors. Initially, the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority in New York promised drivers that automated toll records would be surrendered only under court order. A few months later, police investigating a murder in Brooklyn demanded to see toll records. A judge ordered the authority to turn over the records.

Since then, the authority has provided police with toll pass records for dozens of criminal investigations. The authority says its policy is to supply information only for serious crimes, but privacy advocates are concerned. Will toll records soon be available for divorces, lawsuits and other civil cases? Will suspicious spouses and stalkers be able to obtain toll data, citing freedom of information laws that apply to government records? Would you be surprised?

If you think the simple solution is to pay cash, don't visit New Jersey. In an effort to catch toll cheats, the Garden State will videotape and store the license plate number of each vehicle passing through the booths. Like their colleagues across the bridge, Jersey turnpike officials promise the videos won't be used for any purpose other than catching cheaters. That is, until they think of one.

Biometrics

What could be a better form of identification than parts of your body? Computer scanners can identify your fingerprints, thumbprints, hand shape, iris pattern, retinas, face, signature, voice, the veins in your arm, even your body odor. Thousands of locations, including airports, day care centers and sperm banks, require individuals to offer their bodies for scrutiny. Biometrics are used to verify the identities of cruise ship passengers, casino gamblers, credit card applicants, bank customers, immigrants and even passholders at Disney World. In coming years, our parts will be increasingly scanned and the images traded and sold among businesses and government agencies as identity markers.

The government has big plans for biometrics. At the National Security Agency, a group called the Biometric Consortium is working to fulfill its mission "to increase the availability of biometric authentication and identification." State governments hope to collect and share the digital fingerprints of anyone who accepts welfare. Who will control your bioscans, and who will have access to them?

New Hires Database

Created by the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, this database is designed to track parents who cross state lines to avoid paying child support. Employers are required to furnish the name, Social Security number and home address of each new hire. That information is compared against existing databases of deadbeat parents, and when a match is made, the employer must withhold support payments.

The law requires that employers transmit quarterly wage and unemployment claims for every worker, regardless of whether he or she is a deadbeat parent, or even a parent. Like toll pass records, this information is too enticing to have escaped the attention of other government agencies. The I.R.S. hopes to use the database to collect delinquent taxes, and other agencies such as the Justice Department also will have access. Let's hope the information is accurate. The *Los Angeles Times* documented numerous cases in which inaccurate data in the city's deadbeat records fingered the wrong man and entangled him in a bureaucratic nightmare. And what prevents police and government workers from illegally providing information from this database to any private detective who fronts the right money? They already do that with about every database in existence.

•

Some privacy advocates believe a federal privacy agency should monitor government use of personal data. Vice President Al Gore wants the office of Management and Budget to handle the job. Neither plan is reassuring. "The government has become so large and intrusive that soon our only protection may be the information that it doesn't have," says Steve Dasbach, national director of the Libertarian Party. "If politicians cared at all about privacy, they would abolish databases rather than create new ones."

STARR-CROSSED LOVERS

a $40 million dime novel

LIKE FOUNDING FATHER, LIKE SON

"I sent for the wench to clean my room, and when I came in I kissed her and felt her, for which God forgive me."—*The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709–1712*

FOUNDING FATHER, TAKE TWO

Even the Puritans were more forgiving than the prissy Kenneth Starr. Samuel Terry was as given to showing his penis in inappropriate places as was President Clinton. In 1650, according to John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman's *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, Terry stood outside the meetinghouse in Springfield, Massachusetts "chafing his yard to provoak lust." Masturbating during a Sunday sermon earned him several lashes on the back. Records show that Terry also paid fines for sexual misconduct ("his bride of five months gave birth to their first child, clear evidence that the pair had indulged in premarital intercourse") and for performing in an "immodest and beastly" play.

Then, the fine for sexual misconduct was £4. (Today, the legal bill alone can run into the millions.) "Despite this history of sexual offenses," write D'Emilio and Freedman, "a sinner like Samuel Terry could command respect among his peers. Terry not only served as a town constable, but the court also entrusted him with the custody of another man's infant son. In short, as long as he accepted punishment for his transgressions, Samuel Terry remained a citizen in good standing."

Of course, if we had a yard to chafe, we'd run for president.

MAY WE HAVE THE ENVELOPE?

Yeah, yeah. We noted the irony. Congress voted to keep smut off the Internet but then voted to release the Starr report online. And we know the numbers: 445 pages, 119,059 words, 92 mentions of oral sex, 62 references to breasts, 39 appearances of the word genitalia, 29 citings of phone sex and 19 of semen. Judge Starr is a man titillated by words such as bra, unzipped and cigar (27 references alone). We can picture him running a mouse over his

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naked body. Any day we expect to see a letter that asks, "How do I clean semen from my keyboard?"

This was supposed to be government porn; a salacious document you could masturbate to. It wasn't. The Meese Commission report wins hands down. And up. And down.

SLICK WILLIE?

The Starr report presents an almost touching picture of Clinton. He is pure Southern Baptist, struggling with temptation and failing. That it took some ten encounters before there was even brief genital-to-genital contact suggests not a lothario but a bumbling Boy Scout. He was courteous ("May I kiss you?") and cautious ("This could be a problem"). Who would have guessed?

CHOOSE THE MOVIE

Which film most accurately describes the Starr report?

(a) *Fatal Attraction*, in which a psychotic career woman tries to turn a sexual encounter into a relationship and ends up going after Michael Douglas, his wife and the family rabbit with a butcher knife.

(b) *Clerks*, in which a bunch of slackers argue over whether blow jobs count as real sex.

(c) *The English Patient*, in which two lovers have reckless sex in a room some 20 feet from an unsuspecting spouse.

Correct answer: (c) If you recall, the hero ends up in the burn unit. The Starr report's sole purpose is to turn Clinton into toast.

NOW WE BELIEVE HE DIDN'T INHALE

And she didn't swallow. Monica performed oral sex seven times before Clinton allowed himself to come. When he did, he felt sick. He came one more time. She came twice.

This is the best the leader of the free world can do?

PHRASE MOST LIKELY TO ENTER THE VOCABULARY

An aide to the president thought Monica was getting a lot of "face time."

AD CAMPAIGNS WE EXPECT

The Gap will do something about that little blue number. The laundering instructions will be changed from DRY CLEAN ONLY TO DRY CLEAN EARLY AND OFTEN. Radio Shack will recruit Linda Tripp as a spokesperson for room-bugging devices: "For $29.95, you too can bring down the government!"

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PRESIDENTIAL SEX TRICKS

Parson Starr dwells loathingly on Monica's story that the president

flavored a cigar with her vaginal juices, as though "sex with objects" were an un-American activity. Any reader of Anaïs Nin knows the story of the artist who would place a warm pipe against his lover's cunt so that it seemed "as if it had been dipped in peach juice."

Starr spent more than $40 million to instruct America in the sexual uses of Altoids breath mints. Oddly, in the same month the report came out, *The Playboy Advisor* ran an item on using Altoids to improve oral sex (calling them overrated but worth the experiment). Years ago, we described a sex trick called the Pepsodent blow job (in which the giver puts a dab of mint-flavored toothpaste in her mouth). Shortly thereafter, we heard a rumor that a candidate for federal office was having an affair with a woman who would give him Pepsodent blow jobs in the backseats of limousines. We never pursued this—after all, a politician's private life was his own.

HEF ON THE PLAYBOY PRESIDENT

"Clinton is no JFK. Monica is no Marilyn Monroe. Sex is part of the fabric of life. The great presidents of the century—from Roosevelt to Kennedy—had mistresses. Do we really want to make marital fidelity a test for public office? We elected Clinton to be President, not Pope."

HOW MANY SEXUAL ENCOUNTERS CAN DANCE ON THE HEAD OF A PENIS?

The Starr report maintains that Clinton lied in his Paula Jones deposition when he denied having "a sexual affair" or "a sexual relationship" or "sexual relations." Any recent survey shows that most people have had far more sexual partners than they have had "affairs" or "relationships." A one-night stand is not a relationship. Hugh Grant's fling with Divine Brown wasn't an affair.

Clinton defined real sex like this: It's not real if you are fully clothed. It's not real if you aren't performing intercourse. It's not real if you don't come. Real sex is naked intercourse.

That definition is as old as America. Thanks to Puritan lawmakers, the only form of legal sex for centuries was intercourse for the purpose of procreation in a relationship sanctioned by church and state. Anything else was criminal, with such tasty names as that "abominable, detestable crime against nature" or "the crime unfit to be named." Starr would have us believe Clinton obstructed justice, committed perjury and split hairs. Imagine a defense that went, "We weren't having sex, we were committing a crime against nature." Sodomy is not grounds for impeachment.

WORD LEAST LIKELY TO CROSS OVER TO THE MAINSTREAM

The Starr report accuses the president and his team of lawyers of "parsing." How many of you looked up the word? On the other hand, "touching with intent" may become a trend crime of its own. Whatever it is, Clinton did it well enough to win the approval of most Americans who watched the four-hour videotape.

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A NEW PROTOCOL

We learned that Monica and Bill tussled and *kept Yasir Arafat waiting!* Hey, maybe that's perfectly proper in the grand order of things. That twit should be kept waiting. Let the State Department issue new orders: a mandatory blow job before receiving any foreign head. Full-body massage and masturbation to climax before dealing with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

THE PHONE THING

Be honest now. How many of you have had oral sex performed on you while talking to someone on the phone? How many of you went out and tried it after reading the Starr report? Did any of the congressmen tagged by Starr as the victims of Clinton's office sex really deserve the president's undivided attention?

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

If someone had demanded that a founding father "list any women other than your wife with whom you have had, proposed having or sought to have sexual relations," he would have been slapped in the face, asked to name a second and then been impaled on a rapier at dawn.

What happened to the code of honor, where a gentleman doesn't discuss his or another man's lovers?

OBSTRUCTION OF INJUSTICE

Paula Jones never had a case. Even if the events she described truly happened, they did not constitute sexual harassment. A single unwanted sexual overture is not sexual harassment. Millions of Americans desire people who don't desire them back. This is called unrequited love and it is the stuff of country-and-western songs. When Paula Jones tried to turn a Clinton come-on into money and a better job in California, that was sexual harassment—a quid pro quo form of sexual extortion.

All of this started because of the theory that harassers follow patterns. This theory gave lawyers the right of discovery, the right to conduct a wild-goose chase through Clinton's Rolodex. Clinton, to his credit, resisted the attempt to "criminalize his private life." As should every American. Consensual sex is not evidence of wrongdoing. Discretion is not obstruction of justice.

ON THE OTHER HAND

Can you say "discretion"? Monica Lewinsky told 11 people about the affair, including a therapist who had a best-seller in the Eighties called *Nice Girls Do*.

The Starr report presents a perfect case of sexual harassment. After putting on her presidential kneepads, Monica besieged Clinton with calls, notes and threatening letters, demanding a better job.

Clinton tried to get her a job outside Washington, not to evade Ken Starr or Paula Jones' lawyers but simply to get her to shut up. Katie Roiphe, writing in *The New York Times*, spotted this reverse exploitation: "There should be a term connoting the opposite of sexual harassment: When a person of less power uses her sexual attractiveness or personal relationship with a person of greater power to get ahead."

Gee, a modern woman who sucks her way to the top—don't we have a word for her? —JAMES R. PETERSEN

THE WAR ON DRUGS

This past summer my wife and I were moving to Ohio from Florida. While driving through South Carolina, we passed a drug checkpoint, and minutes later we were pulled over by the police, supposedly because we had a flickering turn signal. The officers insisted on searching our van and trailer, and when we objected, one asked us what we had to hide. Another officer brought out a police dog, which circled our vehicles but smelled nothing (since there was nothing there). The officer proceeded to smack our door on the driver's side and the dog jumped. Claiming the dog had "alerted" to the presence of drugs, the officers then ransacked our van.

When the officers discovered one of my legal firearms, my wife and I were handcuffed, even though we informed them that I had had three back surgeries and needed a fourth. They ignored us and cuffed my hands behind my back.

When we got to the checkpoint my wife and I were left cuffed for two hours in 100-degree heat. While waiting, I noticed that everyone detained at the stop had long hair or was black or Latino.

After our van was thoroughly searched and the police found no drugs, the sheriff asked why I hadn't informed him that I worked for the federal government (I am a disabled air traffic controller). What difference would that have made? Our van was damaged and I was left with severe back pain.

After we arrived in Ohio, we spotted the state police doing the same type of searches on highway travelers.

This experience has left me with disturbing memories and questions. Are the police looking for excuses to confiscate our assets? What's next? Door-to-door strip searches?

Michael Guy
Johnstown, Ohio

The war on drugs has given police wide latitude in searching motorists; in most cases, they need only to have "probable cause," the most relaxed of legal standards, to search for contraband. If it's any consolation, be grateful the officers didn't seize everything you own, including your cash. A few years ago in Los Angeles, police stopped Albert Alexander, claiming he had run a stop sign. They searched his car but found no drugs. What they did find was a plastic bag containing $30,060 in cash. When the officers showed the money to a police dog, it barked. That was all a prosecutor needed to allege that the cash was tainted with trace amounts of drugs (as is most U.S. currency in major cities). It took Alexander nearly five years to get his money back.

FOR THE RECORD

Guilty Until Nude

"How do Customs inspectors at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago choose which passengers to search for drugs?

"Customs admits the process is subjective. Take a look at these guidelines we found in Customs' internal training manual:

- Suspect is overly talkative or does not converse
- Suspect is unusually cool or exhibits nervousness
- Suspect is overdressed or wears a revealing dress

"In other words, give the wrong impression, and you could find yourself strip-searched."

—FROM A REPORT BY RENEE FERGUSON, A JOURNALIST WITH CHICAGO'S WMAQ-TV. FOLLOWING ALLEGATIONS THAT CUSTOMS AGENTS AT O'HARE AIRPORT TARGETED BLACK WOMEN FOR STRIP SEARCHES, FERGUSON EXAMINED THE NUMBERS. OF THE 104 PEOPLE STRIP-SEARCHED AT O'HARE IN 1997, TWO OF THREE WERE WOMEN AND NEARLY HALF WERE BLACK WOMEN. THREE QUARTERS OF THE 104 PEOPLE ORDERED TO DISROBE HAD NO DRUGS. OVERALL, CUSTOMS AGENTS IN CHICAGO SEARCHED THE LUGGAGE OR CLOTHING OF MORE THAN 31,000 TRAVELERS IN 1997; OF THIS NUMBER ONLY 61 WERE FOUND WITH DRUGS.

Is there evidence that marijuana is a gateway to narcotics? If so, what percentage of pot smokers graduate to hard drugs? Dealers are savvy businesspeople who know they can make the most profit by selling narcotics. Maybe they use the gateway concept to their advantage by persuading marijuana users to graduate to more expensive drugs. During Prohibition, beer drinkers were persuaded to become whiskey drinkers. Is the same thing happening with drugs?

Mike Bell
Enid, Oklahoma

Hardly. The huge majority of marijuana smokers never move on to narcotics. As Mike Gray points out in "Drug Crazy," his excellent book on the futility of the drug war, government figures show that of the 70 million Americans who have smoked weed, "98 percent don't end up on anything harder than martinis." The gateway argument involves flawed logic. If you asked the estimated 582,000 frequent cocaine users and 196,000 frequent heroin users in this country if they had ever tried marijuana, most if not all would say yes. Therefore, smoking marijuana must lead to the use of narcotics. Using the same logic, if you asked a sampling of cigarette smokers if they had ever had sex, you could conclude that sex leads to cigarette smoking.

DRUG WAR BACKLASH

In his letter to *The Playboy Forum* ("Backlash Responses," *Reader Response*, August), Gary Beatty attempts to justify the life sentence given to first-time, nonviolent drug offender David Correa. I first became aware of David's plight in 1994. I was so outraged, I decided to write him in prison to let him

RESPONSE

know there are people on the outside who care. We've since become good friends.

Despite what Beatty says, David never claimed to be an "innocent casualty" of the drug war. Instead, he described his ordeal as a "horror story." David admits that he transported 495 grams of powder cocaine as a favor for a friend who turned out to be a government informant—a crime that should have warranted a sentence of no more than five years. Instead, he was given a life sentence because of trumped-up conspiracy charges.

Beatty tries to defend the government's position by bringing up the machine guns, grenades, silencers and ammunition found in David's home. He neglects to mention that David was a BATF-licensed firearms dealer and that the only weapons charges he faced stemmed from the grenades. Had the other weapons been illegal, they would have been seized immediately as contraband items.

Beatty's implication that David was involved in a drug-related murder is hearsay. In David's presentencing report, the victim is listed as "none." Life without parole in a case where there is no victim—is that reflective of a civil society?

Beatty writes that he would not attempt to defend the drug war. He deserves some credit for that. There is no defense.

William Perry
Bethesda, Maryland

CONVERTING GAYS

Readers of *The Playboy Forum* may have noticed the ads placed in newspapers this past summer by 25 conservative Christian groups. The ads claimed that homosexuals can become heterosexual through prayer. Researchers have been unable to identify the factors that determine sexual orientation, but they are certain it can't be changed. Homosexuality is not a sin. It's not a disease. It's not an addiction. And it's not a choice.

These so-called Christians are involved in a nasty business. Their campaign is carefully orchestrated to give them an issue they hope will translate into political gains. Then they can finally push their social agenda on the rest of us.

Iver Bogen
Duluth, Minnesota

THE VIAGRA CURE

Marty Klein suggests in "Store-Bought Erections" (*The Playboy Forum*, September) that Viagra overcomes psychological problems. He's wrong. It overcomes physical problems. I take Viagra and it works fine for me.

For years we have heard that impotence is a psychological problem that can be solved by talking about it. Now that a pill debunks that argument, I can see why psychologists have objections. It invalidates most of their theories about male sexual dysfunction.

Don Sanders
Baytown, Texas

THE DRUG MARIJUANA

I must applaud Dr. Lester Grinspoon for the most telling and incisive article I have ever read on marijuana ("Prescribing the Forbidden Medicine," *The Playboy Forum*, August). I had no idea it had such medicinal properties, which makes its narcotics classification all the more ludicrous.

After reading the piece and sharing it with my fiancée, we discussed whether or not we'd go out and buy pot for someone we loved who needed it to treat chemotherapy side effects, or glaucoma, or some other serious illness or condition. Our answer was an unqualified yes, despite the fact that neither one of us endorses recreational use of the drug.

If every member of the Food and Drug Administration and the Drug Enforcement Administration had a family member in pain from cancer and knew relief was available, marijuana's classification would be changed. I hope the word—and strong statements such as Grinspoon's—will reach the right people before another person is forced to suffer the agony of disease at the hands of bureaucracy.

David Abolafia
Queens, New York

SEX ACROSS THE AGES

In his letter to *The Playboy Forum* ("Washington Sex Tour," *Reader Response*, August), Curtis Brown defends President Clinton's sexual escapades. He writes, "Thank God we have a president who is hornier than thou instead of one who is a geriatric hypocrite." People who use the word geriatric as a pejorative are—if they live long enough—in for a sad surprise. Not every person born before Hugh Hefner is a sex-negative troglodyte, and not every person born after he was is an enlightened libertine.

Craig Sheerin
Old Town, Maine

We would like to hear your point of view. Send questions, opinions and quirky stuff to: The Playboy Forum Reader Response, PLAYBOY, *680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611. Please include a daytime telephone number. Fax number: 312-951-2939. E-mail: forum@playboy.com (please include your city and state).*

FORUM F.Y.I.

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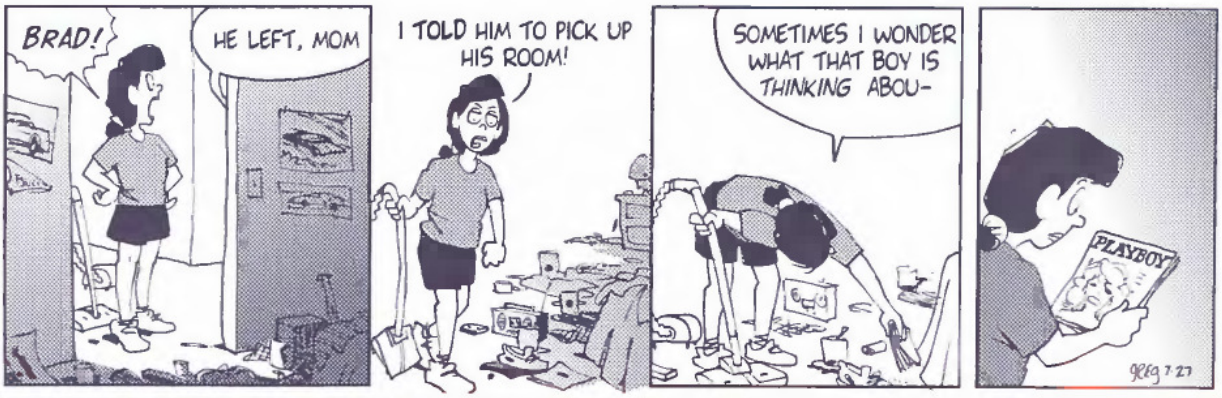
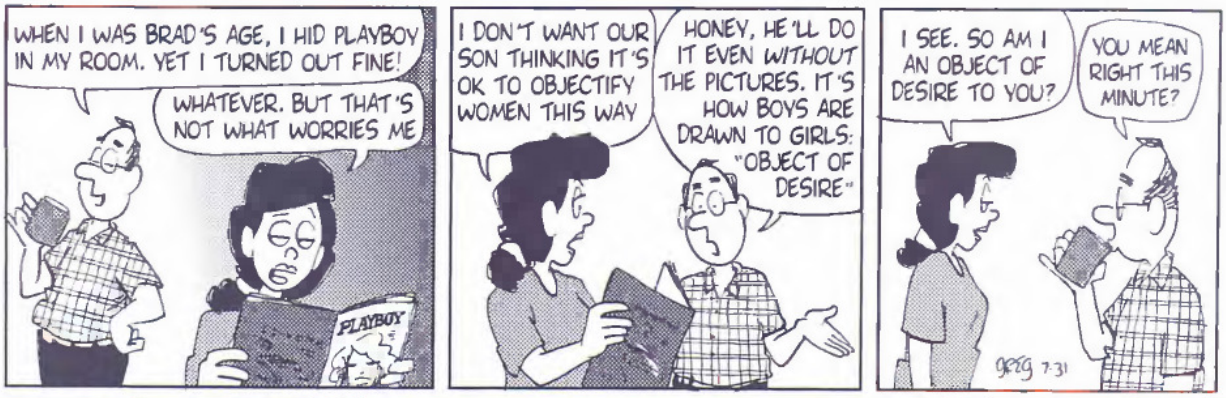
CARTOONIST'S NOTEBOOK

Luann®

playboy makes the funny papers



WHY DO YOU MEN ENJOY LOOKING AT THESE KINDS OF PICTURES? I DON'T GET IT
PLAYBOY
I MEAN, THESE GIRLS ARE POWDERED, PAINTED AND SOFT-LIT TO IMPOSSIBLE PERFECTION. THOSE SEXY LOOKS AND LACY OUTFITS ARE PURE FANTASY
SO WHAT PART DON'T YOU GET?
GREG 7-30


WHEN I WAS BRAD'S AGE, I HID PLAYBOY IN MY ROOM. YET I TURNED OUT FINE!
WHATEVER. BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT WORRIES ME
PLAYBOY
I DON'T WANT OUR SON THINKING IT'S OK TO OBJECTIFY WOMEN THIS WAY
HONEY, HE'LL DO IT EVEN WITHOUT THE PICTURES. IT'S HOW BOYS ARE DRAWN TO GIRLS: "OBJECT OF DESIRE"
I SEE. SO AM I AN OBJECT OF DESIRE TO YOU?
YOU MEAN RIGHT THIS MINUTE?
GREG 7-31

I'M GLAD YOU FOUND THAT PLAYBOY. I BORROWED IT FROM A GIRL AT SCHOOL TO RESEARCH AN ESSAY
THERE'S A GOOD ARTICLE ON "PERSONAL FREEDOMS IN AMERICA." YOU GUYS SHOULD READ IT
HE BORROWED THIS FROM A GIRL?
HE READ AN ARTICLE?
GREG 8-7

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THE KING'S RICHES

when does a fine become excessive?

By JAMES BOVARD

The Eighth Amendment of the Constitution reads: "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." This past summer, for the first time, the Supreme Court defined "excessive" as it pertains to the imposition of criminal fines.

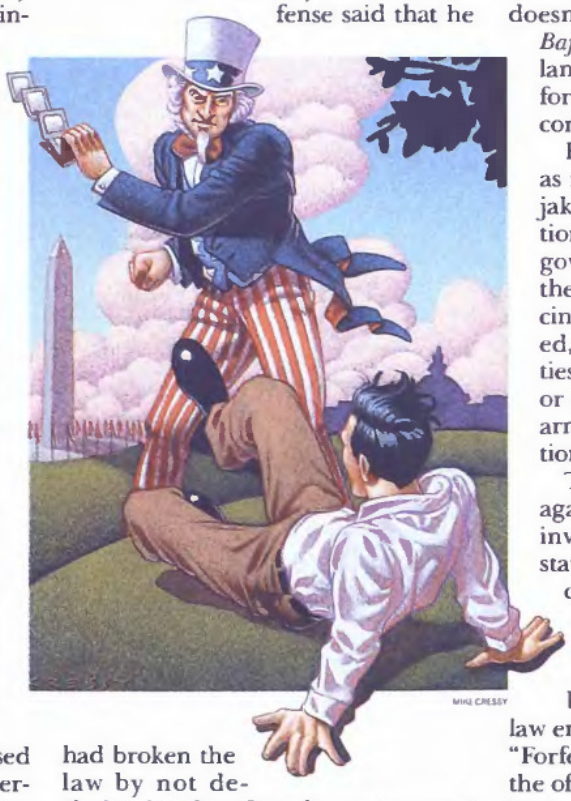
The case before the Court, *U.S. vs. Bajakajian*, began in 1994, when Customs agents seized $357,144 in cash from a Los Angeles resident traveling with his family through LAX on the way to Cyprus. Hosep Bajakajian, a Syrian immigrant, intended to repay loans to relatives abroad who had invested in his gas station business. He and his wife had hidden the money deep in their luggage because they feared that overseas customs agents would steal it.

U.S. Customs agents found the currency first. They noted that Bajakajian had failed to file Customs Form 4790, which is required of anyone who is taking more than $10,000 in cash out of the country. The government, after what must have been careful deliberation, determined that the fine for this oversight should be precisely $357,144. (Bajakajian is not alone. In fiscal 1997, Customs agents seized $236 million from travelers leaving the country.) Two federal courts found in Bajakajian's favor, more or less: They lowered the forfeiture to $15,000, ordered the maximum fine under sentencing guidelines ($5000) and sentenced him to three years' probation.

The Justice Department expressed outrage at such coddling of a paperwork criminal. It appealed to the Supreme Court. During oral arguments, a Justice Department lawyer declared that any time a person takes more than $10,000 from the country without filing the proper form, "we have a dangerous situation on our hands."

In a brief, the government also made the case that seizing undeclared currency prevents crime. Here's how: "Forfeiture encourages persons to inform the government they are transporting more than $10,000 outside the country and prevents such money from being used in circumvention of requirements in the future." Using the same reasoning, Uncle Sam could confiscate the contents of your bank account to prevent you from making any illicit purchases.

The question facing the Supreme Court was: Is all of Bajakajian's money, as a fine, too much of his money? The government conceded the gas station owner had earned the cash lawfully, but in its defense said that he had broken the law by not declaring it. Therefore the government deserved the money because of its far-reaching authority to seize nearly any property involved in illegal activity. When pressed by the justices to cite a crime that would be exempt from forfeiture, a government lawyer said that a parking violation might not be enough to allow Uncle Sam to take your property.



By the narrowest of margins, the Supreme Court rejected this antiquated view. Writing for the majority in a 5–4 split, Clarence Thomas declared that "a punitive forfeiture violates the excessive fines clause if it is grossly disproportional to the gravity of a defendant's offense." The government had not made its case that his cash created a "dangerous situation."

Thomas also stressed that, historically, "the theory behind such forfeitures was the fiction that the action is directed against 'guilty property,' rather than against the offender." This medieval concept is one of the chief absurdities of forfeiture law: Because cash, boats, cars and homes have no legal standing, seizing them doesn't violate anyone's rights. The *Bajakajian* decision could signal a landmark shift, combining respect for property rights with traditional concerns over civil liberties.

Elsewhere in his opinion, Thomas noted that the forfeiture of Bajakajian's cash "bears no correlation to any injury suffered by the government." He didn't develop the thought further, but it is a fascinating standard. If widely adopted, it could undermine the penalties doled out for many consensual or nonviolent offenses such as firearms or drug possession, prostitution and gambling.

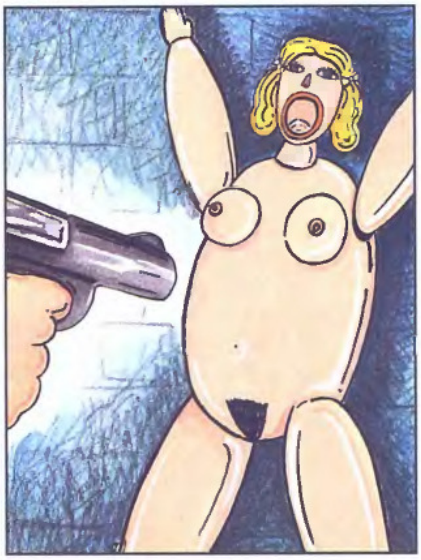
The four justices who voted against returning Bajakajian's cash invoked a 14th century English statute that authorized the confiscation of gold and silver exported without a license. Unfortunately, some of the Court's conservative justices seem to believe that whatever is good for law enforcement is good for America. "Forfeiture of the money involved in the offense would compensate for the investigative and enforcement expenses of the Customs Service," wrote Justice Anthony Kennedy. (In other words, if the government decides to spy on you, it can seize your possessions to cover the cost of spying on you.) Kennedy lamented that in this case, "the majority in effect approves a meager $15,000 forfeiture." Kennedy and the other dissenters apparently never considered whether the government deserved a cent of the man's money.

NEWSFRONT

what's happening in the sexual and social arenas

ILLEGAL SEX TOYS

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA—*Six women asked a federal judge to block a state law that bans the sale of vibrators, dildos and other sex toys. The statute makes it a crime*



punishable by a $10,000 maximum fine or up to a year in jail to distribute "any device designed or marketed as useful primarily for the stimulation of human genital organs." (Mere possession of sex toys remains legal.) The law passed after being added to a bill outlawing strip clubs in a northern Alabama county. "No one wants the government in their bedroom," said Sherri Williams, one of the plaintiffs. She owns two stores in Alabama that sell sex toys. Another plaintiff sold toys through in-home parties; the others say they need sexual aids to reach orgasm. The ACLU, which filed the suit for the women, says the law violates their right to privacy.

RHYMES WITH HYSTERIA

SANDY, UTAH—*An elementary school principal suspended an eight-year-old for three days after the boy composed a ditty that rhymed "Venus" with "penis." A female classmate overheard the impromptu verse and told her parents, who complained. The principal told "The Salt Lake Tribune" she suspended the boy for sexual harassment because the word penis had made the girl uncomfortable. An assistant superintendent refused to recite the poem to a "Tribune" reporter, saying: "I'd blush to tell you what he said. I've been in this business for 25 years and this is the worst I've ever heard."*

MORE ON SILICONE

LONDON—*A panel of scientists appointed to review evidence that silicone breast implants cause long-term illnesses concluded that women have no need to worry. The seven scientists, appointed to a review panel by the government health minister, said they could find no conclusive evidence that silicone causes immune system disorders or other serious illnesses. They advised, however, that doctors give patients more information about the risks of hardening, rupture and breast infection. Silicone implants for cosmetic surgery have been banned in the U.S. since 1992, but the UK has no restrictions.*

BACK TWO STEPS

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA—*The state supreme court voted 6–1 to deny a gay man custody of his two sons because he admitted having sex with his live-in boyfriend. Fred Smith took custody of his sons in 1991 after his wife left him for another man and moved to Kansas. Soon after, Smith says, he realized he was gay. His boyfriend moved in a few years later, and Smith's ex-wife tried to take custody of the boys. Smith and his partner told the judges they had oral sex behind closed doors but kissed in front of the boys, now ten and 13. The court insisted it was not taking Smith's sons because he is gay but rather because he is an "improper influence"—specifically, because he has sex outside of marriage and keeps photos of drag queens in a box in his closet. The ruling may be broad enough to apply to straight people who are divorced and own adult magazines or videos or have dates spend the night.*

YEA FOR MARIJUANA

LAS VEGAS—*Organizers worked for months to gather the 46,764 signatures needed to put a medical marijuana initiative on the November ballot, but election officials who checked the petition said it fell short by 43 names. After Americans for Medical Rights asked for a recount, officials discovered 30 names that had been overlooked and validated 46 previously rejected. If the initiative is approved this fall and again in 2000, an amendment to the Nevada constitution will allow seriously ill patients to smoke marijuana for relief. Voters in Alaska, Oregon and Washington will consider similar initiatives; Oregon voters also will weigh a legislative effort to criminalize the possession of an ounce or less of weed.*

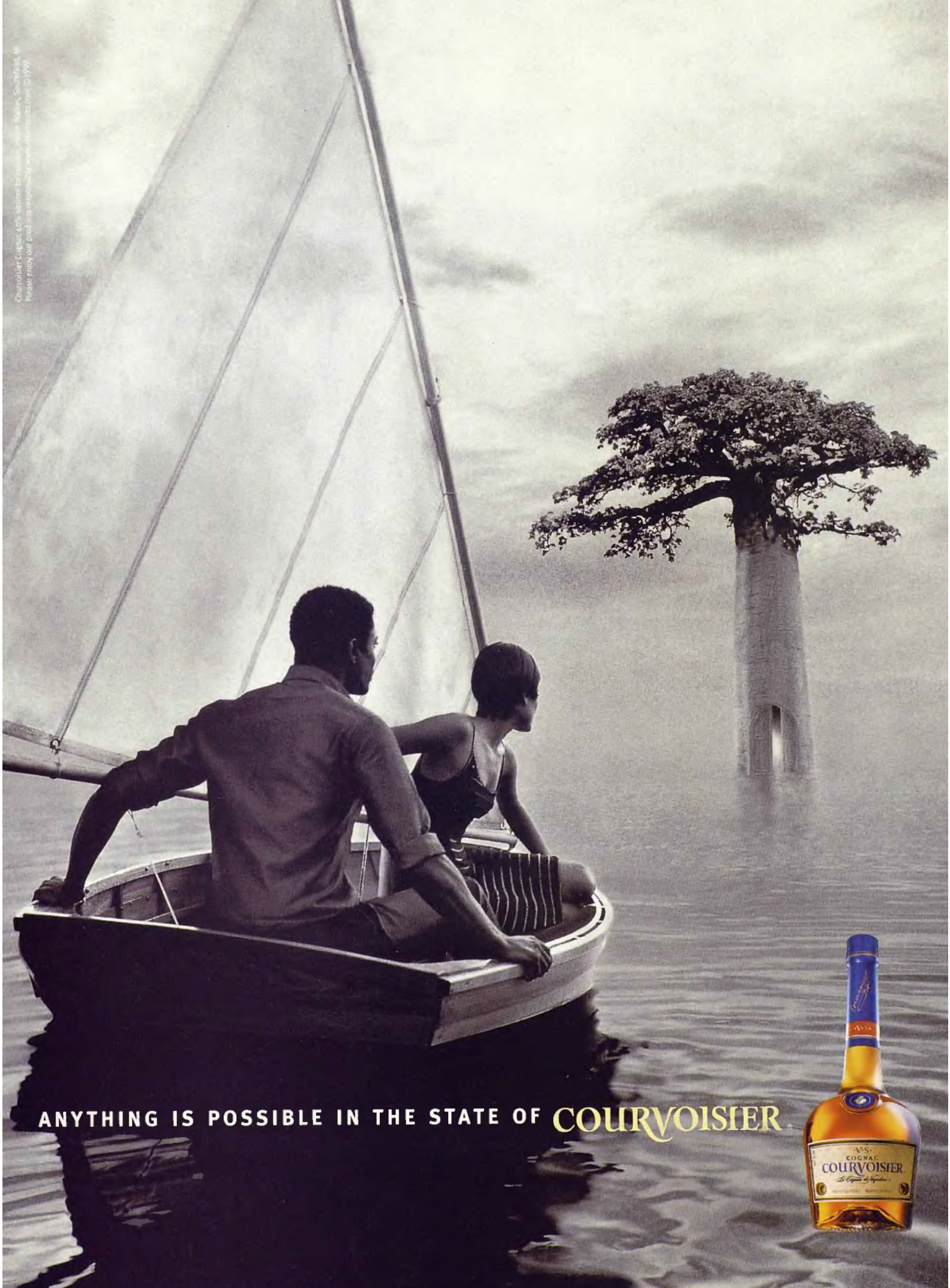
BETHESDA, MARYLAND—*A chemical in marijuana may protect brain cells from the effects of a stroke, according to scientists at the National Institutes of Health. In experiments with rat neurons, researchers found that cannabidiol prevented more than half of the brain cell death associated with stroke. If the findings are confirmed, the hope is that cannabidiol can limit brain damage in victims of stroke, heart attack, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.*

THE FRIENDLY SKIES

PORTLAND, OREGON—*A group of about 150 graduating high school students turned a chartered flight to Mexico into a rowdy celebration that included a wet T-shirt contest. The Federal Aviation Administration launched an investigation after receiving a complaint from a parent who heard about the debauchery. One participant shot a shaky video that showed a male flight attendant announcing, "Contestant number five, please! Some water for contestant number five. She's dry!" Witnesses also said several girls entered the*

cockpit so the pilots could cast their votes. One 18-year-old, sounding like he got his money's worth, told the Associated Press, "The wet T-shirt contest was a pretty high moment for me. I will probably never see something like that on a plane again."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KEVIN POPE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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: DAVID DUCHOVNY

a candid conversation with the brooding "x-files" star about life on the set with gillian anderson, life at home with téa leoni and life on the road with porno tapes

It's a classic "X-Files" moment. Special Agent Fox Mulder, played by David Duchovny, stares forlornly off a bluff, contemplating yet another investigation gone wrong. Only minutes earlier, he had been driving wildly, then came to a screeching halt on this bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean. In the backseat: a man Mulder desperately wanted to save. Close behind was Mulder's partner, Special Agent Dana Scully, bringing a syringe full of the mystery concoction that could have saved the man's life. But when you specialize in the paranormal you can pretty much expect that your victim will expire in a most paranormal way. And that's precisely what happens. Unable to inject the medication in time, Mulder watches helplessly as the victim's head explodes all over the backseat. No wonder Mulder is depressed.

Later, back in his trailer, Duchovny gives some insight into his character's mood. "Any time somebody's head explodes in your car, it's upsetting," he explains drily.

Horror and humor. Without those elements subtly intertwined, "The X-Files" would be just another TV show instead of that odd hybrid—a hit TV show with a devoted cult following. And no one manages to straddle the mixed demands of the show better than Duchovny, whose morose underacting is deftly leavened by a deadpan sense of humor. It's the perfect combination for a show often described as a cross between "Twin Peaks" and "The Twilight Zone"—a TV series for paranoids and zealots who are sure the government covers up what it knows about the UFOs and aliens among us. Mulder's own obsession stemmed from having seen, or so he believed, his younger sister abducted by aliens when she was eight.

In a bit of fortunate casting, Duchovny was paired with Gillian Anderson, who landed the role of Dana Scully, the rational disbeliever. Anderson, voted "most bizarre girl" in high school, was the perfect match for the wry Duchovny. Their chemistry worked, and the palpable sexual tension could be milked for the entire series without any actual romance. Mulder, after all, is a guy who sleeps on a couch, watches pornographic videotapes and never has sex (except with a vampire).

The series has done more than help boost the Fox network in the ratings. A movie spin-off, "The X-Files: Fight the Future," was released this past summer. It was a bold attempt, because more movies-from-TV-shows have failed ("The Avengers," "The Saint") than have succeeded ("The Fugitive," "Mission: Impossible"). But the gamble paid off, as the $60 million "X-Files" movie grossed $83 million domestically and is expected to more than double that internationally.

Few TV shows or movies develop such a fanatical following. At conventions and on the Internet, diehard believers debate every conspiratorial nuance (there are hundreds of Web sites devoted to dissecting the meaning of the ghost trains, black helicopters, bees, corn, Agent Scully's crucifix and other obscure details). But the show has also grown beyond cult status: Twenty million people tune in on Sunday nights (and 10 million for the syndicated repeats) to see what's been cooked up by the Cigarette Smoking Man or the head of the Syndicate or the faceless men or the alien-human hybrids created by a black-oil virus.

At the heart of all this attention is Duchovny. He was born on August 7, 1960 and grew up in New York City. When he was 11, his parents split up and he and his sister and brother stayed with their Scottish-born mother, Margaret, then a teacher. His father, Amram, a playwright ("The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald") and publicist who edited the humorous book "The Wisdom of Spiro T. Agnew," moved to Boston after the divorce and now lives in Paris. Duchovny won a scholarship to Collegiate, an exclusive prep school in Manhattan, where one of his fellow students was John Kennedy Jr. Duchovny excelled in sports (baseball and basketball) and academics (he was valedictorian) and was accepted to four Ivy League schools

"Mulder and Scully have a chaste love affair. I think that's what people really like about it. We've done it for five years. That's a lot of chastity. People ask if they are ever going to get it together. I don't think they should."

"When we started we were the only scary show on TV. Now there are a lot of scary shows, like 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer' and 'Millennium.' I think 'Caroline in the City' is scary. People like to be scared. It's fun TV."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIZUNO

"I think porn is fine. I like to watch people fuck. My big porn years were the Eighties. Alicia Monet was my favorite. If anything good can happen from this interview, it's that Alicia would contact me for lunch."

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(Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Brown). He chose Princeton for undergraduate and Yale for graduate school (on a teaching fellowship), where he studied modern literature, concentrating on Samuel Beckett. To the chagrin of his mother, he never completed his doctorate because a friend introduced him to acting as a way to supplement his income (he also worked as a bartender during the summer). Duchovny had discovered his profession.

He started doing commercials in 1985 and auditioned for parts in the movies "Bull Durham" and "Valmont." It was director Henry Jaglom who recognized his potential and cast him as a seducer in his 1989 film "New Year's Day." Duchovny followed that with small parts in "Venice/Venice," "Julia Has Two Lovers," "The Rapture," "Beethoven," "Ruby" and "Chaplin." In 1993 he appeared with Brad Pitt and Juliette Lewis in "Kalifornia." That same year "The X-Files" creator Chris Carter thought Duchovny might be right for playing Fox Mulder.

Duchovny also gained notoriety for his sexually adventurous roles. He dressed in drag for "Twin Peaks," flirted openly with Garry Shandling during a running story line on "The Larry Sanders Show" and appeared as a regular character on Showtime's erotic breakthrough series, "Red Shoe Diaries."

Like most TV actors, Duchovny has big-screen ambitions. His "X-Files" contract is up in two years, and he plans to leave TV behind (though he will continue to star as Fox Mulder in the series of "X-Files" movies the studio hopes will live on long after the TV show dies). Duchovny starred in the little-seen movie "Playing God" in 1997, about a doctor who is coerced into working for the Mob.

Movie roles might be easier to come by now that the series has switched locations. "The X-Files" was originally filmed in Vancouver, which gave the show its moody, rainy look (and saved the studio from paying Hollywood salaries to the crew). But when Duchovny fell in love with and married Téa Leoni (who starred in the TV show "The Naked Truth" and the films "Flirting With Disaster" and "Deep Impact"), the long shooting schedule and lengthy separations began to drag on him. Furthermore, he managed to offend Canadians when he complained to a reporter that "Vancouver is a nice place if you like 400 inches of rainfall a day." Soon after, the marquee on a local strip club suggested that Duchovny go home, and he took the advice, persuading the producers to move the show from Canada to Los Angeles.

To find out more about this unorthodox actor, PLAYBOY *sent Contributing Editor* **Lawrence Grobel** *(whose last interview was with Christopher Walken) to the Fox lot and on location. Grobel's report follows:*

"The first few times we met, Duchovny was in his trailer on the Fox lot, putting the finishing touches on the 'X-Files' movie. There were constant interruptions—visitors who wanted to say hello or have a picture taken or signed, studio heads who wanted, as Duchovny told me after they left, 'to blow smoke up my ass.' He was as interested in asking me questions about people I had interviewed for PLAYBOY *as he was in answering my questions. 'Which actors did Brando say he admired?' he wanted to know. 'Would Pacino rather direct than act? Why won't he do ads in Japan?' 'How does Anthony Hopkins memorize his lines?' 'What did Saul Bellow think of the dramatization of "Seize the Day?"' 'How does Joyce Carol Oates feel she can write well about men?'*

"For our final sessions, we spoke in his TV trailer in San Pedro, a few months after 'The X-Files: Fight the Future' had come out and he was back playing Mulder for the series. He was pleased with a poem of his that a magazine had published and showed me others he had written and hoped to turn into a book. I read his poems, offered my suggestions (for whatever they were worth) and then we got down to business."

PLAYBOY: You once described *The X-Files* to Garry Shandling on *The Larry Sanders Show* as "Laurel and Hardy with sexual tension." Do you still believe that?

DUCHOVNY: No, we were improvising. When you did the talk-show part on *The Larry Sanders Show* you were actually doing a talk show. None of that was scripted. What I said makes no sense to me. I don't know what that means. I think what Mulder and Scully have goes back to Cary Grant movies, where verbal sparring had to code sexual sparring. I think that's what people really like about it. It's this kind of chaste love affair. And we've done it for five years. That's a lot of chastity. Usually at the end of a movie the guy and the girl kiss, even if they've been sparring throughout. With us, it's an intense buildup. People ask, "Are Mulder and Scully ever going to get it together?" I think no at this point. I don't think they should.

PLAYBOY: How did the show keep from getting stuck in the science fiction ghetto and attract more than a cult following?

DUCHOVNY: We do a cop show with paranormal phenomena. The show is amazing because it has an all-inclusive tone. On one end it can take itself completely seriously on ridiculous stuff like liberating aliens or a conspiracy that will bring down the entire world, and on the other end it can be lighthearted and funny.

PLAYBOY: Is that what accounts for the show's popularity?

DUCHOVNY: The enduring popularity of our show has to do with the fact that we've established two interesting characters in almost soap-opera fashion. We have embarked upon a long-running mythological story that people want to get to the bottom of, punctuated by interesting stand-alone monster-of-the-week episodes. When we started we were really the only scary show on TV. Now there are scary shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Millennium*. I think

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Caroline in the City is very scary [*laughs*]. People like to be scared; it's fun TV.

PLAYBOY: Some people claim we're all looking for a religious experience, and that shows about alien abductions are basically that.

DUCHOVNY: If not a religious experience then a life-changing experience. Every week something happens that would be world-altering if it were true. The genetic freaks or monsters we deal with would revolutionize any evolutionary way of thinking. If the series is not religious in the normal sense of the word, it's cataclysmic.

PLAYBOY: You've called it a "secular religious show."

DUCHOVNY: I was stretching. The show is evocative, it's part of the cultural lexicon now. *ER* is twice as popular, but you don't hear people making an adjective out of *ER*. We've achieved iconic status somehow. Everything is the *something*-files now.

PLAYBOY: How much have we embraced the worldview of *The X-Files*: "Trust no one," "The truth is out there"?

DUCHOVNY: I'm not sure that people are so into that. On a popular level it was one of the first shows to state outright that the government is lying to you. Or, at least, that the FBI is lying to its own agents. People always like to have somebody to blame.

PLAYBOY: How much of the show is based on real-life events?

DUCHOVNY: Read the recent news about splicing, cloning and genetic engineering. That has become important for the idea in our show that experiments are being conducted with alien DNA. Things that were science fiction ten years ago and were pretty much a joke—as cloning was in *Sleeper*—are now a reality. It helps that science is more imaginative than science fiction. It helps that there are brilliant people out there, so that we knuckleheads can actually make metaphors out of science and make trivial use of incredible breakthroughs.

PLAYBOY: What do you think about all these breakthroughs?

DUCHOVNY: Biologically, we're not far from cloning a human being, but what would be the purpose? We'd have to decide who is worthy of cloning. We'd clone Stephen Hawking and Michael Jordan, but what does that mean? It kind of ruins the preciousness of life.

PLAYBOY: Cloning could also be used for spare parts.

DUCHOVNY: Oh, so you farm your own. That's so mean to the poor clones. So you've got all your clones in the backyard fighting because they don't want to give up their liver. I don't know if life should be so precious that we try that hard to hold on to it. Maybe there are people who love life a lot more than I do.

PLAYBOY: Are you often unsatisfied with what you do?

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DUCHOVNY: Always. I have never been satisfied.

PLAYBOY: There isn't one show in which you feel you nailed it?

DUCHOVNY: No. There are definitely shows I feel are really good, even great.

PLAYBOY: Of the 110 shows you've done, what percentage would you say are really good?

DUCHOVNY: I'd say ten percent are the great ones. Really good, or good, 80 percent. Lousy, ten percent.

PLAYBOY: Do the lousy ones make you cringe?

DUCHOVNY: There are the lousy ones that you know are going to be lousy. Then there are the lousy ones that should have been better. Those hurt more, because you think, Maybe I fucked up.

PLAYBOY: You told PLAYBOY a few years ago that Fox Mulder was on an inward journey and asked, "Why is this man in so much pain? Why is he obsessed? Why would anyone want to live their life this way? How do we heal him? How do we show him the truth?" Any answers?

DUCHOVNY: I said that? That's good. I think his pain comes from the fact that he feels he could have protected his sister but didn't. She was taken from him when he was 12 and she was eight, and he's come to realize that she was abducted by aliens—at least he thinks so—and that he might have been able to stop it in some way. Then, during the journey we've had for the past five years, he found out that he was the one who was supposed to have been taken and not his sister, so there's a lot of survivor guilt going on. He can't enjoy himself. He can't rest until he's sure they've done everything to find the girl he let go.

PLAYBOY: As you said, why would anyone want to live that way?

DUCHOVNY: Right. He doesn't appear to have any interests outside that. We've never seen him in a bed; he sleeps on his couch. He watches pornography. He doesn't have sexual relations, except once, with a vampire. He cannot have joy until somebody else does. As soon as he starts to have joy he feels guilty.

PLAYBOY: Will he ever find the truth?

DUCHOVNY: No. When he matures he'll realize that the truth is not something to be had. Mulder is very young because he really thinks there's an answer. He thinks there's a bad guy. He thinks if someone finds that guy, everything will be OK. That's a young point of view. When he grows up he's going to turn into a different person. But I like that about him. I like the intensity of his belief that he can fix things.

PLAYBOY: Your schedule conflicted with appearing in Oliver Stone's *Any Given Sunday*, a movie about pro football. Was that disappointing?

DUCHOVNY: I would do anything to work with Oliver Stone. I really like him. I've always wanted to play an athlete in a movie, and it was a rude awakening to realize the only part for me in his film was that of an aging quarterback. But Oliver wanted me for the team doctor. When we first met I told him I was a good athlete and he said he had seen George Clooney, who is a really good athlete. I said, "I'm a better athlete than Clooney. He talks about how he can beat me in basketball, but I guarantee you he can't." And Stone said, "Well, you don't have the neck for it." I said, "Joe Montana doesn't have a big neck. If you tell me I can have this part, I'll work on my neck." We laughed. Then he called later and asked again if I wanted the doctor part. I said, "I'm working on my neck."

PLAYBOY: Are there any other movies in the works?

DUCHOVNY: Bonnie Hunt co-wrote and will direct *Return to Me*, a romantic comedy about heart transplants. I want to do it.

PLAYBOY: Is TV better than movies?

DUCHOVNY: Yeah, though I think a great movie beats a great television show. It's like, does a great karate guy beat a great boxer? A great movie is—a movie. But look at the writing and the drama on *X-Files* and *NYPD Blue*, which to me are the two best dramas on television. I feel they're better executed than the drama in most movies.

PLAYBOY: Then why do movies?

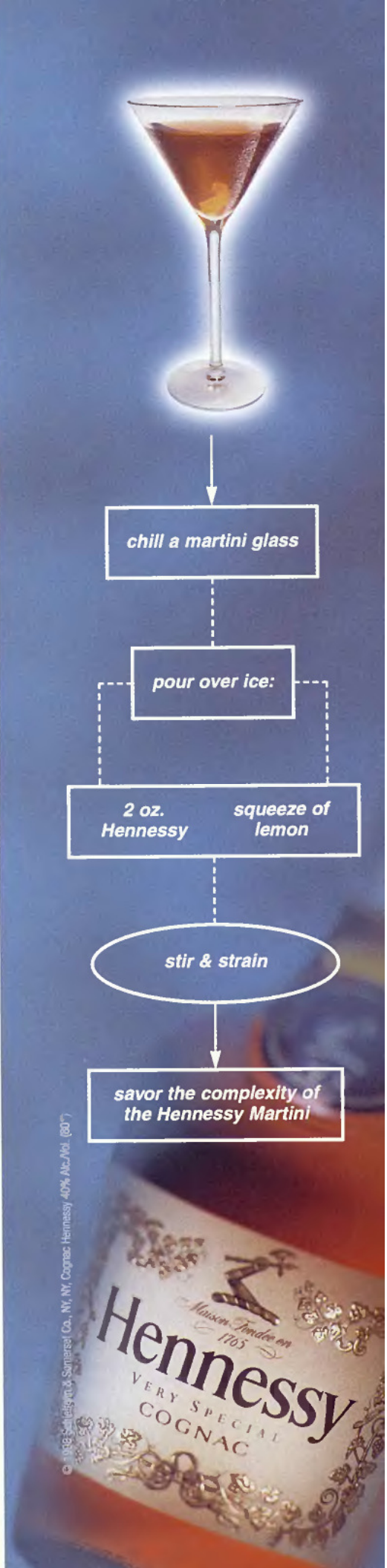
DUCHOVNY: Regardless of how good the story line is on a TV show, you're playing the same character. I'm proud of *The X-Files*, and when all is said and done I'll be proud to have created 150 hours or so of really good entertainment and the best TV we could do. But in the end I'm playing 150 hours of the same guy.

PLAYBOY: Another actor who attempted to make the leap from a successful television show to the big screen was David Caruso. His career has certainly faltered since he left *NYPD Blue*. Is his a cautionary tale?

DUCHOVNY: No. As trite as it sounds, everybody is individual, everyone has their own career to pursue. Alec Baldwin came from a soap opera, so did Demi Moore. Bruce Willis came from *Moonlighting*. Tom Selleck came from *Magnum, P.I.*—it didn't happen for him. Clint Eastwood came from TV. There are millions of actors who were never on TV or film, who never made it. There are film actors who were successful at first and then weren't, then made a comeback. To think there's an equation is bogus. We all have our paths. What Caruso did is so different from what I'm doing: He left a hit TV show after one year. He acted in a couple of movies that didn't do well; now he's back on TV. I've been completely loyal. This is my sixth year on the TV show. I've fulfilled my responsibilities.

PLAYBOY: How was the *The X-Files* movie received?

DUCHOVNY: Critically, it was hard for people to discuss the movie without discussing the television show. Critics had



an ax to grind. The movie did great and I was really happy with it—it was a smart, funny adventure–science fiction thriller. It worked. But critics seem to have a prejudice against television. A lot of them said they didn't understand it because they don't watch the TV show. They missed the fact that our show deliberately leaves people in doubt—that's part of our M.O. They thought if they were in doubt it was because they didn't have enough information. That might be a risky situation in film because it's a one-shot thing, whereas in TV you get to come back. So the critics may have had a point. But underlying their criticism is the idea that it's only a TV show blown up into a movie. But what's wrong with that if you're telling a good story? Look at *Armageddon*, *Godzilla*, *Independence Day*. Those are much thinner stories than what we attempted to tell, yet they didn't get that kind of criticism. So there were some prejudices against the film that I hadn't anticipated. Also, our TV show is still on and it's playing five times a week and it's free. The movie has been a success, so they'll do another one. It's a $60 million film that has already made $83 million domestically. Worldwide we'll probably make as much or more than *Armageddon*. I won't do another one until the TV show is off the air. I think the audience will miss it when it goes off the air.

PLAYBOY: Recently you said that you and Gillian have been thrown together, that you're "two people who don't know each other, and we've been forced to spend more time together than married people do." It's curious that you would use the present tense when describing someone you have worked so closely with for five years.

DUCHOVNY: I was referring to the original coupling. But we still don't know each other very well. We're not close personally. We're close professionally. But we're not tight. I don't think we ever will be. I like her. I think she likes me. It's all fine.

PLAYBOY: What is it about your on-screen chemistry that makes it work?

DUCHOVNY: The meeting of two minds. Mutual respect. Scully came to this relationship believing Mulder was a crackpot, but she was open to some of his ideas. And he took this new partner and trusted her, what she had to say. It's an equal partnership, and that's sexy to people.

PLAYBOY: Can Mulder or Scully ever be replaced?

DUCHOVNY: Yeah, everybody can be replaced. It's a double equation and it's contradictory, and here's how it goes: *The X-Files* would not have been a success without me, but I am replaceable at this point. It wouldn't have gotten to where it is if I hadn't been in it in the beginning, but now that it is where it is, I'm dispensable. I mean, you get fans who say, "Oh no, it wouldn't be the same without you." But in the end, you're just an actor playing a role.

PLAYBOY: Before the *X-Files* movie, you starred in *Playing God*, which disappeared quickly. You said that it was your way of saying, "I'm not Mulder; hear me roar." Was anyone listening?

DUCHOVNY: Not with *Playing God*. That was a small movie, but because I'm a big TV star people assumed it was my breakout movie. I never intended it to be that. When it didn't make $40 million, people assumed that I thought it was a bomb or that I was disgraced. It was exactly what I thought it would be. Maybe not as good as I wanted it to be, but I never saw it as a hit movie.

PLAYBOY: One writer said that you have an air of confidence that could be interpreted as smugness. Are you smug?

DUCHOVNY: Gillian did an interview in which she said I was arrogant, and when I read the article I wondered, Why would someone think I'm arrogant? A friend of mine said, "If you don't need something from somebody, if you're independent, they'll think you're arrogant. Because that's threatening." OK, I'll take that. I'm a little like Holden Caulfield—the things I hate more than anything else are hypocrisy and pretension. They make my skin crawl. And I would put arrogance in the same category. To perceive myself as arrogant would hurt.

PLAYBOY: *Vanity Fair* described you as "very handsome, though in a winsomely flawed way, his nose a bit too large, his grin slightly geeky."

DUCHOVNY: I called Téa and asked, "What does winsome mean?" [*Laughs*] I know what win means and I know what some means, it's like you win some, you lose some.

PLAYBOY: Do women still come on to you or has marriage changed that?

DUCHOVNY: I don't think marriage changes that. What changes is the way the sexes relate—you smile at each other and then it escalates. I don't respond to that now. It's not someone else's responsibility to honor my marriage. It's my responsibility. I never got that attitude toward cheating: "How could she have an affair with a married man?" Isn't that his responsibility?

PLAYBOY: So it doesn't matter what Monica Lewinsky did, it matters what President Clinton did?

DUCHOVNY: Absolutely. And I don't care what either of them did.

PLAYBOY: Lewinsky's father knew where to put the blame.

DUCHOVNY: Well, he's her dad. If she were my daughter I'd probably blame Clinton, too. When you have family involved, it's another story.

PLAYBOY: One of Lewinsky's lawyers called the president a misogynist. Do you have an opinion?

DUCHOVNY: That comes from fucking women's lib. We're all smarting from that. It was a necessary revolution. Women had to have a revolution, but let's now have a counterrevolution and get back to where we should be. We can't have Andrea Dworkin saying that unless a man asks for a kiss, it's rape. That's not human nature, it's not animal nature. I see her on TV saying we should have guidelines for dating in colleges. The man would have to ask if he can hold a hand, have a kiss, each step of the way: "May I touch your breasts? May I put my hand down your pants? May I touch your clitoris?" It's ridiculous.

PLAYBOY: What do men do in the workplace now, when they have to fear charges of harassment if they say the wrong thing?

DUCHOVNY: Sexual harassment is about sex, not about harassment. It's become about power, and that's not the same thing. It's all fucked up. We've got people trying to win the lottery on other people. It's easy, because it's just he said–she said. If I try to get you to have sex with me and I threaten that you'll lose your job if you don't, that's sexual harassment. If I say, "Nice ass," I shouldn't be sued unless you say, "You know, it bothers me when you say I have a nice ass." And then I say, "Nice ass" ten more times. Then you say, "Obviously I'm not getting through to you. Do I have to sue you?" But now people are being sued for millions of dollars because they said "Nice ass" once, jokingly, by the water cooler. It's horseshit.

PLAYBOY: What if you pat a woman's ass by the water cooler?

DUCHOVNY: I don't think you should be sued. She can slap you, or she can say, "Next time you touch me I'm going to get my brother" or "I'll sue you." I believe in warnings. What happened to the warning?

PLAYBOY: Do you like pornography?

DUCHOVNY: I think pornography is fine. Without getting into a discussion about how it demeans women and all that shit, I like to watch other people fuck. That's the fun part—they're doing all the work. Something funny happened to me in Vancouver. At hotels in Canada you get full porn, unlike in America, where they cut out all the penetration and private parts, and you just get a shot of the guy from behind, which I don't need to see. When I watched porn, I'd rent three tapes and do reconnaissance work first—I'd fast-forward to see what caught my eye and then I'd catalog it. Then I'd make my choices and go back and watch. But you can't do that in a hotel because the movie won't play again for another eight hours. So if you're masturbating and not just watching, you have to make a decision fast. I had to change my porn-watching habits and commit early. In Vancouver I learned that beyond the initial commitment to the scene where I wanted to get off, I had no control over

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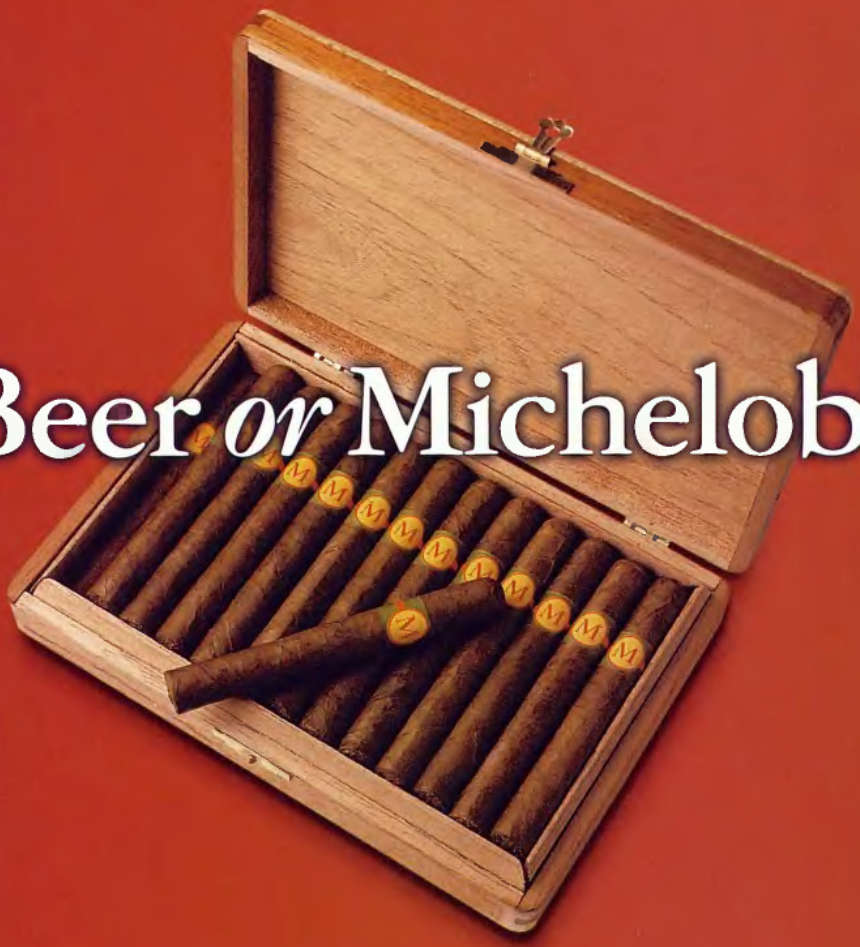

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the moment I got off. Once you go over that edge to an orgasm, you can't pull back. So you give over and then you're at the mercy of the cuts—and all of a sudden you're looking at a guy's sweaty ass and you're coming, and then you're thinking, Oh my God, I'm questioning my sexuality, because that wasn't half bad. That's my porn story from Canada.

PLAYBOY: Did you have favorite porn stars?

DUCHOVNY: My big porn years were the late Eighties. It's like watching sports—it has eras. Was Marilyn Chambers better than Ona Zee? Who knows? The names that will forever be in my pornographic heart are Alicia Monet, Alicia Rio, Amber Lynn, Ginger Lynn. You know how the moviegoing public likes to see Tom Cruise—they like to have a known quantity out there. I was the same way with porn. I was like, "Who's that nobody? I'm not sure she's good." Alicia Monet was my favorite. If anything good can happen from this interview, it's that Alicia Monet would contact me and we could have lunch. God, if she only knew how many lonely periods she got me through. I don't think porn stars know how weirdly important they are in people's lives.

PLAYBOY: Do you agree with Robin Williams that fame leads to money and drugs, which are there to tempt and distract you?

DUCHOVNY: I never had the drug problem. Fame does lead to money, which I don't have a close relationship with. I'm the kind of guy who never sees the money—it all goes somewhere else. I don't understand it, I don't like to deal with it. I have a fear of not having it, because I grew up without it. My mother was always vocal that we were very close to not having anything. There was always a fear that one day we'd be out on the street, though, looking back, that was not a reality. But I definitely was scared of ending up in the gutter—that's the way we put it.

PLAYBOY: Is that one of the reasons you decided to be an actor rather than a professor—because it's more lucrative?

DUCHOVNY: No, it wasn't about being rich. I never imagined being rich. It wasn't something that I strove for. A professor makes plenty of money, and it's a solid income once you get tenure. You're pulling in $60,000 to $100,000 for the rest of your life—that would have been fine.

PLAYBOY: Which teachers left their mark on you?

DUCHOVNY: I studied poetry with Maxine Kumin. That was fun. One of the problems with being in college is you're all the same age and writing about the same things. Maxine used to sneak in friends from her generation, so we'd have a 70-year-old woman writing poems with us. It just opened up the class. I wrote a break-up-with-my-girlfriend poem, a get-back-together-with-my-girlfriend poem, and I had to read them. A lot of coffee, cigarettes. Then this woman friend of Maxine's began her poem: "I have stitched my labia shut." It was so far beyond, both thematically and chronologically, anything any of us were approaching. We were just investigating labia for the first time and she was leaving it behind. Maxine was very good that way.

PLAYBOY: What's the difference between graduate and undergraduate students?

DUCHOVNY: Graduate students are petrified. As an undergraduate you say what's on your mind, you rap with the teacher. But in graduate school you pronounce yourself a professional—this is what you do for a living. You're petrified to be wrong. All of a sudden these lively discussions about literature that used to take place are silenced. In our graduate Romantic Poetry class with Harold Bloom, there was a precocious undergraduate, Naomi Wolf, who has since become known as a feminist writer. She was the only one who would talk. Because she didn't care, she didn't have anything to lose. Bloom was always bemoaning something in his lilting, sad voice, asking about what something would be like, and we'd all be silent, afraid to be exposed. But Naomi Wolf would raise her hand and respond, "It would be a world without adjectives." And he'd say, "Exactly, my dear." And I was like, I'm in the wrong place. Not only did I not get the answer, I didn't even understand the question. A world without adjectives. I just don't get it. Though that would be a good name for a book, wouldn't it?

PLAYBOY: Did you learn discipline playing basketball at Princeton?

DUCHOVNY: No. I learned discipline more from academics than sports. And sacrifice and single-mindedness. My entire life has been an attempt to get back to the kind of feelings you have on a field. The sense of brotherhood, the esprit de corps, the focus—there being no past or future, just the ball. As trite as it sounds, I was happiest playing ball. But I can't do that for a living. And I'm not sure professional athletes have that kind of joy anymore; it's a job for them. With acting you can approach the lack of self-consciousness you have on a basketball court. Acting, sex, sports, religion—those are your ecstatic moments, when you're an animal.

PLAYBOY: And what order do you put those four in?

DUCHOVNY: It's been so long since I've had that feeling in sports, I can't remember it. Sex is great until you die, but it's never as great as it was when you were a kid, when it was a mystery. I'm not a religious person. If I get close to religion it's in these moments when people faint and shudder and have orgasms with religious fervor—I don't think they're kidding. And I'm envious. I guess at this point I'm trying to attain those states through acting. But it's hard when you act as often as I do on a television show, because the nature of a TV series is that you don't get there often. I'm looking forward to the show's ending so I can work less and try to make my professional career more in tune with that.

PLAYBOY: Staying with sports for a moment, which sports figure would you like to have been?

DUCHOVNY: Mantle or Mays or Walter Frazier or Pistol Pete Maravich.

PLAYBOY: Who was a better baseball player, Mantle or Mays?

DUCHOVNY: Willie Mays was the best ever. When I was in college I once made a catch like the one Mays made over his head. Sometimes when I'm lying in bed at night I think about it. It still makes me warm.

PLAYBOY: What other sports memories do that for you?

DUCHOVNY: There was a moment when I was in high school playing basketball. My junior year we were 21–5 and had all our players coming back, so we thought we might go undefeated the next year. But we lost our second game, and our confidence. We had barely won our third game and were losing our fourth. It was tied and they had a couple of foul shots with eight seconds left. The guy hits the first and misses the second. Our center gets the rebound, outlets it to me, I dribble it up and at the top of the key, with three seconds left, I jump. There was something speaking to me and I rifled a pass right under the basket rather than shoot and hit a guy for a lay-up. We won at the buzzer. It's the feeling I had that made me pass that I think about. And that makes me smile. It's that extrasensory feeling that we live for.

PLAYBOY: Do you still have friends from those days?

DUCHOVNY: I have mostly childhood friends. When you're younger you've got a lot of friends, but you don't have time for that many friends when you get older. It's good to have the one or two guys who've known you a long time who you can check in with.

PLAYBOY: So you don't have half a dozen guys you're comfortable playing poker with?

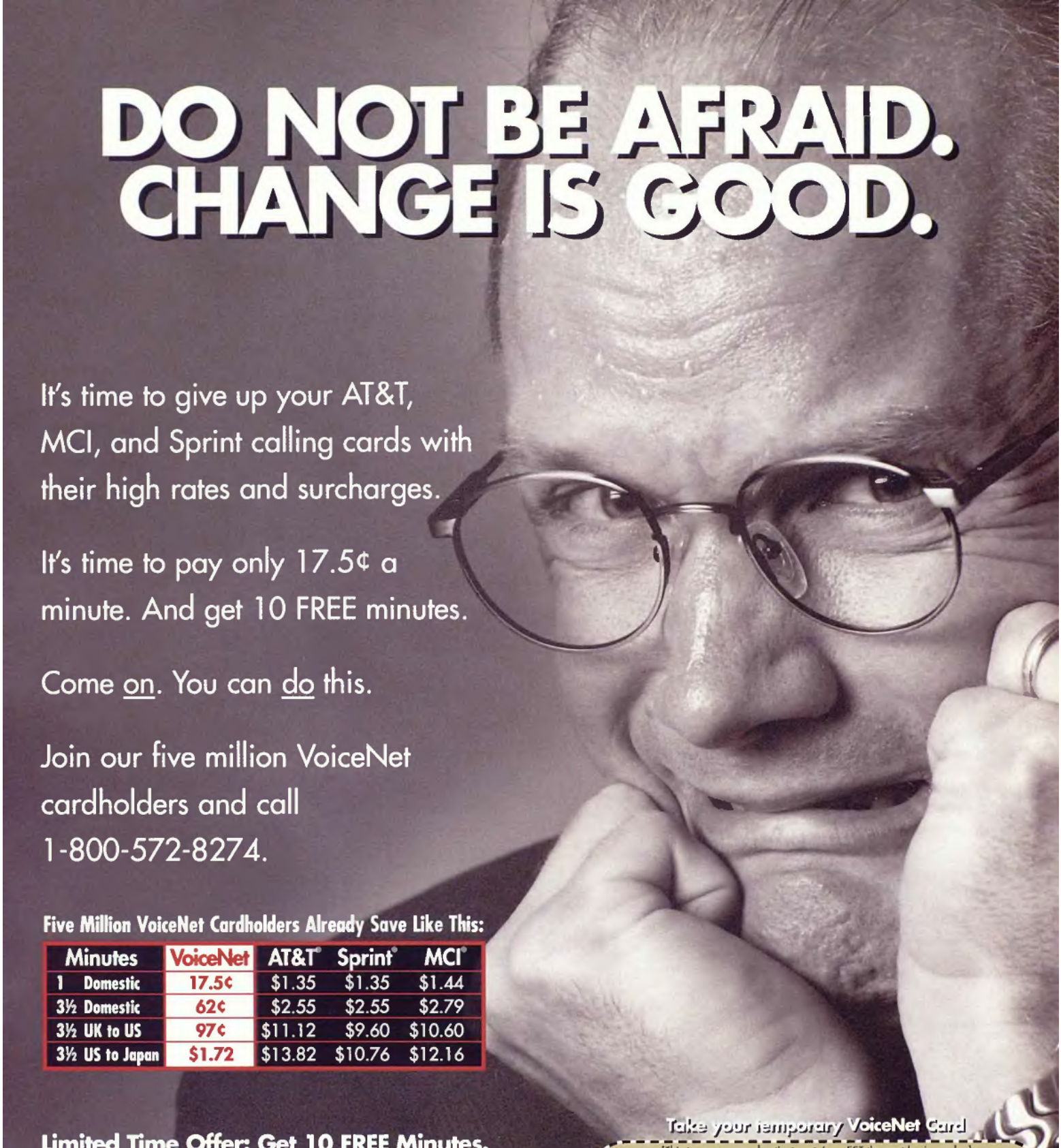
DUCHOVNY: No, not really. My college friends have all dispersed. My best friend from college lives in Beijing. He's a lawyer. We used to play squash together. After we graduated we traveled together for five months in Southeast Asia. But he didn't speak Chinese then so he was no help at all.

PLAYBOY: Where in Southeast Asia did you travel?

DUCHOVNY: Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, all around there, backpacking.

PLAYBOY: Did you smoke opium while you were in Thailand?

DUCHOVNY: Yes. That was very interesting. It was north of Changmai. A group



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of us were trekking, ten people and two guides. It was a 12-day trek. They said, "Do you want to smoke opium with this guy? He's an opium addict." We said sure. We lay down next to him. He used some kind of pipe, where he put the resin on the tip of a stick and then inserted the stick into the pipe. He didn't speak English and was trying to show us how to do it, to draw in deeply. I did one, not a good one, then I did another that was better. Me and my buddy were the only ones in our group who did it. All of a sudden this big storm started and all the animals congregated underneath the hut. We were nodding off and waking up, and the animals were making all these noises and I was convinced that I could understand what they were saying. I'd hear the pigs snorting and the horses talking to one another throughout the village. When you'd go to take a shit you'd walk away from the village and take a dump in the bushes, and the pigs would follow you because they were going to eat your shit. It was hard for us Americans, being so modest, to take a shit while the pigs were watching for a good one [*laughs*]. "Don't pull on that just yet, I haven't released." When we were high we imagined the pigs calling for us to feed them, that we would open up the floorboards and just lay one right there. We were having this whole conversation with the animals. And then some event happened, and somebody came in to talk to the head man of the village, who was one of our guides. There was some kind of crisis, and five people began arguing in the room and they wanted him to settle it. My friend and I were so stoned that we decided we knew what they were talking about, and we made it into a soap opera. Every time somebody spoke I'd go, "What happened was, she slept with his brother. And his brother is his cousin." We were like children, laughing hysterically at how funny we thought we were being, while this serious business was going on. Every once in a while they would look over at us giggling like fools in the corner and shrug, "They're stoned." That was my night on opium. It was what you'd call very dreamy. With your eyes open.

PLAYBOY: Different from marijuana?

DUCHOVNY: Very different.

PLAYBOY: Mushrooms?

DUCHOVNY: Yeah, more dreamy. My experiences with mushrooms were always kind of hyper. Very intense. This was more slow and syrupy.

PLAYBOY: Ever try peyote?

DUCHOVNY: I may have. Pretty sure I did.

PLAYBOY: If you had one wish, what would it be?

DUCHOVNY: It would have to do with writing. To be able to tell a story like Homer. To almost sing a story. Actually, I'd rather sing. If I could sing I probably wouldn't care about writing.

PLAYBOY: What person would you like to be able to sing like?

DUCHOVNY: Many, many people. Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, even Bonnie Raitt. It would be funny, Bonnie Raitt's voice coming out of me, but I would change my physical appearance to make it work.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever write anything for magazines?

DUCHOVNY: I wrote two articles, one for the English *Tatler*, about my high school, and the other I can't remember.

PLAYBOY: What did you write about your high school?

DUCHOVNY: It was years later. And it wasn't good. It was basically about the fact that a lot of rich, famous people's children went to my high school, like John F. Kennedy Jr. and Jacques D'Amboise's son Chris, F.A.O. Schwarz IV, William Kennedy Smith before he was famous, and then a couple of kids who were prodigies on their own merit. We had a guy who was the editor of the *New York Times* crossword puzzle in high school! We had some geniuses there. It was a special school, called Collegiate. I had a great time there.

PLAYBOY: Did you know John Kennedy Jr. at school?

DUCHOVNY: Briefly. My first day at Collegiate I was kind of starstruck. I just wanted to see who John John Kennedy was. I asked this kid at lunch, "Which one is John John?" And he said, "His name is John." That was my first slap in the face. John left after my first year. We had a class trip down to Washington in 1975 and because I was new they put me with him. We roomed together. We went to the White House and one of the tour guides said, "I'm told that John Kennedy Jr. is among you." And we're all saying, "Who?" so that John wouldn't be embarrassed.

PLAYBOY: You mean that they didn't recognize him?

DUCHOVNY: Not then. We all had long hair parted on the side.

PLAYBOY: Did Kennedy talk about the White House?

DUCHOVNY: No. Not at all.

PLAYBOY: Do you know him now?

DUCHOVNY: Yeah.

PLAYBOY: Was it during your high school years that you first had sex?

DUCHOVNY: I lost my virginity when I was 14. And I haven't been able to find it.

PLAYBOY: Did the girl go to high school with you?

DUCHOVNY: She was 84.

PLAYBOY: Are you going to tell us?

DUCHOVNY: She was a year younger, but she wasn't a virgin. She was more experienced than I was.

PLAYBOY: Did she seduce you?

DUCHOVNY: No, it was mutual.

PLAYBOY: Did she know it was the first time for you?

DUCHOVNY: No, but I told her many years later.

PLAYBOY: Any other interesting teenage experiences with women?

DUCHOVNY: When I was 16 I had a Mrs.

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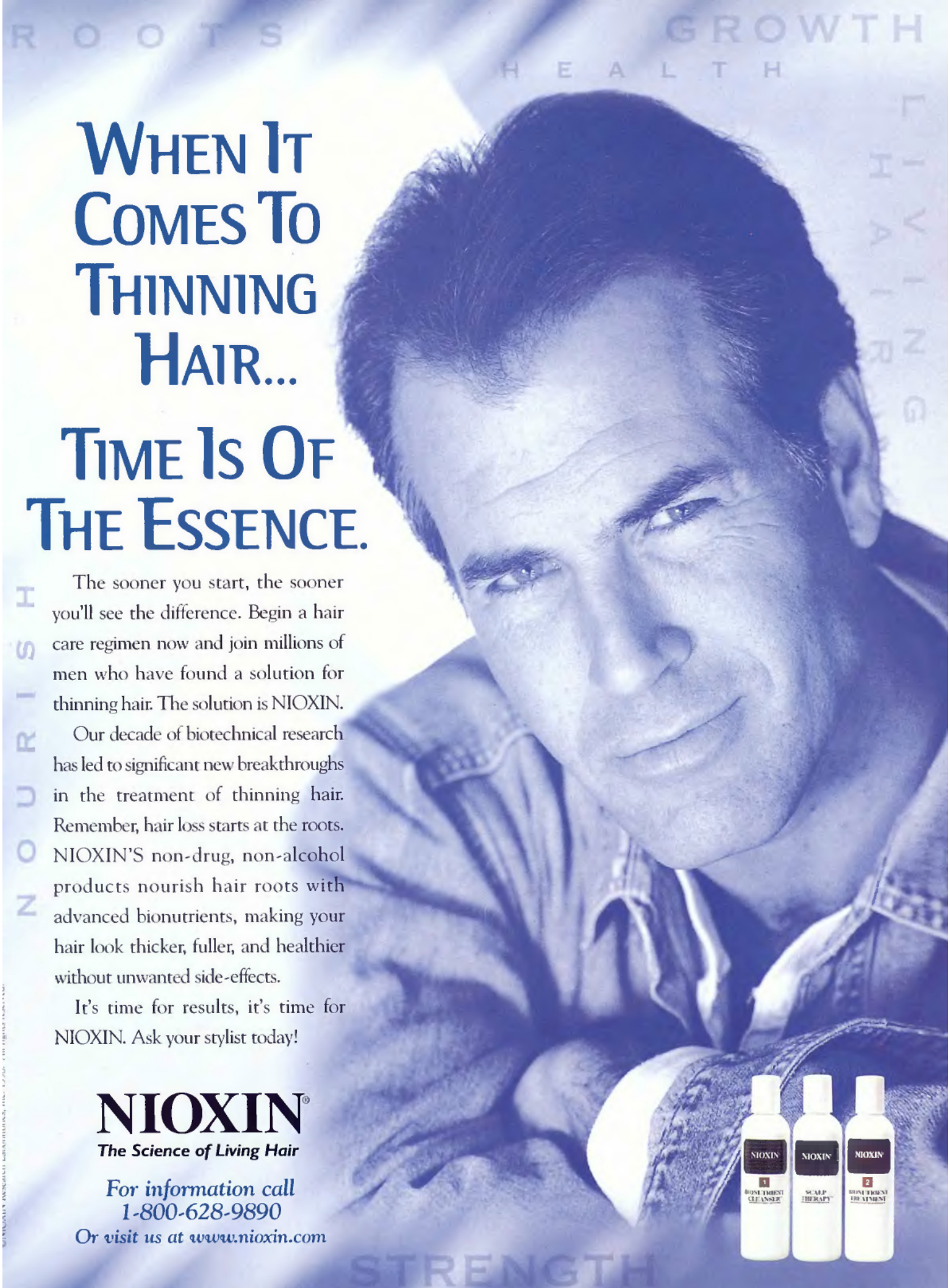

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Robinson. It was really good, gave me a lot of confidence.

PLAYBOY: Was she the mother of any of your friends?

DUCHOVNY: No, though I definitely had my eyes open for that [*laughs*]. That's all I ever thought about. I always wanted an older woman. Actually, at that age it was any woman.

PLAYBOY: How did you finally meet your older woman?

DUCHOVNY: Two girlfriends of mine were babysitting for her. She had kids and was married.

PLAYBOY: Did she seduce you?

DUCHOVNY: Oh yeah. I didn't have the balls. We all went out dancing and she sat on my lap and said, "Take me home and make love to me." She definitely had to make every move.

PLAYBOY: Could you believe it when it was happening?

DUCHOVNY: Oh, I felt I was the luckiest guy in the world.

PLAYBOY: How often did you see her?

DUCHOVNY: Whenever I could!

PLAYBOY: Had you seen *The Graduate*?

DUCHOVNY: No.

PLAYBOY: Have you talked with this woman since?

DUCHOVNY: Yeah, the summer after. It was hard because I was feeling heroic and I took a friend to see her. I was showing off. And she didn't mince words: It was over. And I shouldn't bring anybody around or talk to anybody about it. It was like an introduction to the adult world. I wasn't thinking of any consequences, but she made it clear.

PLAYBOY: Was she sophisticated?

DUCHOVNY: To me, yeah. She was a woman. I'd never been with a woman. I'd been with girls.

PLAYBOY: What happened after that, when you went back to girls?

DUCHOVNY: Actually it's kind of romantic because I fell in love for the first time with a girl my own age while I was seeing the older woman. It was a really specific moment in my life. I was lying in bed with this woman, and she was just beautiful and totally exotic to me. She was younger than I am now. That summer I was a janitor in a place and had a little room. I met a girl who was having trouble with her parents, so I invited her to stay at my place—I had two single beds. I liked her. I called from this woman's house just to see how she was doing. And I remember thinking, I want to be with her. It was weird, because here was my fantasy, and I was having feelings for this girl. It was the first time I fell in love.

PLAYBOY: What happened with her?

DUCHOVNY: We went out for about a year. I still hear from her every now and then. She's been married a couple of times.

PLAYBOY: How did you react when your parents divorced?

DUCHOVNY: I don't think I understood what divorce was or what it all meant. If you tell a child that his father is going to live somewhere else, it's like hearing the sun is so many miles from the earth. You understand what it means but you don't know what it is until it actually happens. It goes on for a month, then six months, then a year—and then it's, Oh, now I understand what that meant.

PLAYBOY: How often did you see your dad after he moved out?

DUCHOVNY: First it was weekends, then less as time went on. It hurt, but I wasn't aware of that. I probably felt rejected. It involved things I wouldn't have had the vocabulary or the mentality to deal with.

PLAYBOY: Did you have other problems as a child? Did you ever steal, for instance?

DUCHOVNY: Yup. I was a good thief. I stole food, candy, all this stuff. I had a foolproof method for stealing sodas: I'd carry a tennis ball can with one ball into the store and then I'd take out the ball and the soda would go right in, perfect, with the ball on top. I never got caught but I got extorted. My friend's big sister said, "You steal for me." I tried it for a couple of days, stealing for me and for her. I realized I was going to get caught, so I quit.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever steal again? Were you totally honest when you worked as a bartender?

DUCHOVNY: I stole money then. Fifty bucks here and there. Wouldn't put it in the register. There were more legal ways of stealing: You come in and have seven drinks and I give you four for free and you give me a $50 tip. That's stealing—I didn't make you pay for the drinks so I would get a big tip.

PLAYBOY: If you could steal anything today, what would it be?

DUCHOVNY: A great artwork from a museum. I don't know which one. Maybe the *Mona Lisa*, that's a wonderful painting. I could look at her.

PLAYBOY: Are there any actors you particularly admire?

DUCHOVNY: I admired Bogart. He didn't give it all away. He was underplaying. If you look at a film of Bogart's, he may have the same expression for the entire movie except for that little twitch, and yet he trusted his own power enough that his moves would be evident. I like actors who don't condescend, who let the audience make up their own minds. Brando has always been my favorite. I love Pacino and Duvall. Meryl Streep is so gifted it's hard to even place her. She's a real actor. Brando, Pacino, Duvall, they're great actors, but they're forceful personalities. You really get a sense of the man. Streep—I've never seen an actor, male or female, who comes close to what she does. I'm not saying I'd rather watch her than any of those guys—sometimes I wouldn't. But her gift as an actor is greater than anybody's I've ever seen. She's like a freak, like Michael Jordan.

PLAYBOY: You married an actor. You took the press by surprise when you and Téa secretly wed. Was that satisfying?

DUCHOVNY: Yes, except that we stayed in New York for our honeymoon, which was a mistake. We were followed around, and it was infuriating. It's hard to describe the powerlessness—an AA word. You can't win. And it's difficult to be in a position where you can't win. For some reason somebody decided, OK, here's the price you have to pay. Then when you complain about it people go, "Didn't you understand? That's the price you have to pay." Because the technology of spying, picture-taking, surveillance has far outstripped the laws against it, we have to redefine spying. There used to be no telephoto lenses. If you're 100 feet from me with a telephoto lens you're actually an inch away. Ostensibly you're in my space, illegally. We really have to reconsider what it is that a public person gives up. Why does a public person give up all his or her rights to privacy? I'm not sure I understand that.

PLAYBOY: How does marriage work between two Ivy League–educated actors?

DUCHOVNY: Téa went to Sarah Lawrence, then she got into Harvard but didn't go. She went on a dare to the *Charlie's Angels* cattle call. They were casting and wanted three unknowns, and she got a part. It never got made, I think because of the Writers' Guild strike.

PLAYBOY: You've said that Téa is "beyond gifted." Is that like saying there are no words to describe her talents?

DUCHOVNY: I know I sound biased, but I truly believe that Téa is a unique performer. She could have been in *Showgirls*, *Speed 2*, in one bomb after another, but she would have survived because she has something that's undeniable. Her performance is always wonderfully enthusiastic, funny, smart, sexy. It's like she can hit and field. She's like Willie Mays, great with the bat and on the field. She's a beautiful woman who's a really talented comedian, and that's rare. She just hasn't yet found the writer and director who can service her, because she's able to do it all. And if she doesn't get too depressed about the business and quits, she will.

PLAYBOY: Were you surprised when her film *Deep Impact* outgrossed *The X-Files: Fight the Future*?

DUCHOVNY: I thought there was no way *Deep Impact* would make more money than our film, and then it did. I wasn't competitive because I thought I'd win easily. Then I was disappointed [*chuckles*]. No, I was happy. She's not competitive at all that way. She was also surprised at how well *Deep Impact* did.

PLAYBOY: Are you and Téa developing a sitcom similar to *I Love Lucy*?

DUCHOVNY: No, that's out of whole cloth. At this point in my career television doesn't appeal to me at all because of the repetition. I could change my tune, but the idea of doing the same thing over and over doesn't appeal to me. Because *The X-Files* is going to be syndicated and

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playing with *The Twilight Zone* and *I Love Lucy* and all these time capsule–type TV shows, I think there's enough David Duchovny out there. Also, I know my own limitations—you don't want to step onstage with Téa, because she will eat you up.

PLAYBOY: Speaking of being upstaged, isn't that how you and Téa met—during a preinterview for a guest shot on *The Tonight Show*, which she got and you didn't?

DUCHOVNY: Yeah, that's true. The audition for *The Tonight Show* takes place over lunch. It's like a meeting, and if you're not famous but a working actor, somebody at the show might know who you are. Then they meet you to see if you have any interesting stories and whether they want you to take up the last five minutes of the show, from 12:20 to 12:25 A.M., after the the monkey has shit on Jay's head and the band hasn't closed the show. That's the spot I was going for. For some reason my manager convinced me that it was a career move of some kind. Téa's manager probably convinced her of the same thing. She was doing a sitcom, *Flying Blind*, at the time, and I had just finished *Kalifornia* and *Twin Peaks*. Unbeknownst to me they were meeting with Téa at the same time. It's brutal enough that you have to audition with your life—it's not like being an actor where you do material. It's like, Am I interesting enough for you, Mr. Leno? And he's not even there. Téa was much more effusive and interesting and funny. She took over the meeting and I sulked. She got on and I didn't, and every time I'd hear her name after that I'd spit, because I thought she had ruined my chance at the big time.

PLAYBOY: And there was no attraction to her at the time?

DUCHOVNY: She was married then. I remember talking to her before the producer showed up. We had both arrived at the restaurant on time, but she doesn't remember that part. I thought she was lively, funny. And she turned it up a notch when we sat down. She hates that story because she thinks it makes her look like some showbiz *All About Eve*. When I finally went on *The Tonight Show* I told this story and then I made up notes that the producer had taken, like, "Téa Leoni is gorgeous and funny and talented, we should have her on the show immediately"; "David Duchovny is a morose loser." And the audience thought it was real. On talk shows I guess I have a deadpan delivery, and people assume what I'm saying is true.

PLAYBOY: Are you more in love now than when you married?

DUCHOVNY: Yeah. It feels different.

PLAYBOY: You said before marrying that staying monogamous requires constant vigilance. Now that you're married does that still hold true?

DUCHOVNY: It's not like you don't notice that a woman is attractive, it's that you know what's at stake. The great benefit of monogamy is that you get to trust the person you're with and she gets to trust you. And so much comes out of that. So whether or not men and women were meant to be monogamous—and we can debate all the theories until we die—I know I gain something great from it. Whether or not it's natural.

PLAYBOY: Does Téa expect you to be different from who you are?

DUCHOVNY: No, the wonderful thing about Téa is that I've never felt entirely comfortable as a stereotypical man. I was a successful male figure in that I was respected by boys because I was athletic, I was big enough, I wasn't beat-up on. But I never felt totally comfortable with that. I was never macho. I never wanted to hunt or box or kill. Téa, on the other hand, was a tomboy, athletic, tough, strong. She also was successful as a girl because she was attractive and could do girl things, but she had a strong masculine side. We understand each other's anxieties about gender identity and stuff like that. I'm not talking in terms of sex at all, I'm talking about the roles that are given to us and how we fit in. You would look at me and think I was the most macho of guys, the captain of all the sports teams I ever played on, yet I never felt that way. And you would look at her and think she's a beautiful girly girl, and yet no.

Send me whatever you want, I'll wear it. I'm an idiot—I should talk about Tiffany's. Let me give a plug to the Federal Reserve. My favorite bill is the one hundred.

PLAYBOY: Did it take working as a transvestite for an episode of *Twin Peaks* to bring out your other side?

DUCHOVNY: [*Laughs*] That was fun. It made it easier for me not to think anything of it. I just felt like, Here's something inside me, why not? We all have access to those things if we just open up. One of the nice things about acting is that it allows you to open up to the other people within you.

PLAYBOY: What did you discover about wearing high heels?

DUCHOVNY: That I was uncomfortable. I felt sorry for women after that. Women's fashion is a subtle form of bondage. It's men's way of binding them. We put them in these tight, high-heeled shoes, we make them wear these tight clothes and we say they look sexy. But they're actually tied up.

PLAYBOY: Why is great sex rare with beautiful women?

DUCHOVNY: There are many answers to that very dangerous question. The first is that you may not be at your best with an extraordinarily beautiful woman. Who was the famous director who married Brigitte Bardot? Roger Vadim? He said he couldn't get it up the first time because she was too beautiful, he was too intimidated. On the other hand, if a woman has been beautiful her entire life, she's never had to work that hard. She hasn't had to be funny, or smart, or a great lay, because people hang around her anyway.

PLAYBOY: Saul Bellow said it was "because great beauties tend to be very narcissistic. They don't give themselves freely because they're much too valuable."

DUCHOVNY: Yeah. See, the good thing about Téa is she didn't blossom until she was older [*laughs*].

PLAYBOY: How many kids would you like to have?

DUCHOVNY: One at a time. We're working on it now. We're not trying not to. Téa wants to save the umbilical cord in the freezer. If the kid ever gets sick, the cord has the goods in it. That's as far as I'll go: You can put the umbilical cord next to the ice cream. But I don't know about having a frozen clone baby in there for spare parts.

PLAYBOY: What do you fear most?

DUCHOVNY: Not physical stuff. It's more emotional, like public humiliation, abject social failure, shame. Now that I'm married and thinking of having a family, my greatest fear is being unable to defend my loved ones.

PLAYBOY: Would you consider getting a gun?

DUCHOVNY: Yeah. I know how to use one. When I start a family I'll have one. It's not that I believe something will happen; it's that you can have bad luck. What if a nut decides to come to your house? That happens.

PLAYBOY: What do you have for protection now?

DUCHOVNY: A baseball bat. Thirty inches is the best. Thirty-four is a little long because you can't swing it in the doorway.

PLAYBOY: Wooden or aluminum?

DUCHOVNY: Wooden. It's a Louisville Slugger 125.

PLAYBOY: There's an advertisement!

DUCHOVNY: Hey, that would be nice. I wouldn't mind getting some bats.

PLAYBOY: Don't you already have a deal with Nike?

DUCHOVNY: No, I don't have any deal. They send me free stuff. Everybody sends you free stuff when you're famous, in the hopes that you'll wear their stuff in public. Send me whatever you want, I'll wear it. I mentioned Bacardi in an article and they sent me a big crate of booze. I'm an idiot—I should talk about Tiffany's, about diamonds. Let me give a plug to the Federal Reserve. My favorite

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PLAYBOY: How old do you see yourself?

DUCHOVNY: Thirty. I'm always surprised when I catch sight of myself in the mirror and I look older than I feel. My dad tells me the same thing. He's 70 and he keeps wondering who that guy in the mirror is. In New York you see these great old women, they've got to be 90, and they've got the rouge on, the lipstick, they've done their hair. When I was younger I used to think, How ridiculous, you still don't want to fuck them. Isn't that what makeup is about? Then I began to realize it's the life force. They're just staying alive, and they do it by keeping up appearances.

PLAYBOY: You and Téa bought a house north of Malibu. Do you like Southern California better than New York?

DUCHOVNY: I've never really been inspired culturally by any city. I grew up in New York, the greatest city in the world, blah blah blah. I never went to any of the museums, I never was inspired by the street life. I don't see that happening anywhere, where people are hanging out in cafés influencing one another. And to me that's the only reason to live in a thriving metropolis. Other than that, Hollywood is full of Philistines and pieces of shit, sure, but so is every other city. California's got great weather and is very livable.

PLAYBOY: More so, obviously, than Vancouver was for you. Are you glad to be away from there?

DUCHOVNY: It's great for me to be down here because I'm living at home. I can't downplay the kind of comfort there is in going home at night, rather than going to an apartment or a place I never considered home. That's all that I ever really wanted to do.

PLAYBOY: Is it true that a Vancouver strip club told you to go home because you knocked the city—comparing it to a tropical rain forest without the tropics?

DUCHOVNY: There was a reporter at the Vancouver *Province* who thought that he could sell papers by misrepresenting me and putting me on the cover of the paper. Then the strip club thought that it could get in the paper, and it did, by barring me from the club, which I'd been to maybe once in five years. Bad-mouthing me became a way for people to sell whatever they were selling.

PLAYBOY: But you did knock the city.

DUCHOVNY: Yeah, and if I had to do it again I wouldn't. Everybody knows it rains a lot up there, and everybody who saw that interview could see I was joking. I thought it was clear that I was making a joke, but I underestimated the xenophobia and the fact that I was a foreigner and a guest in that city. I won't do that again.

PLAYBOY: How much time have you spent in therapy, trying to figure out who you are?

DUCHOVNY: I have a therapist I trust. I've known him six years. When we were shooting in Vancouver I called him, we did the phone thing. Each session lasted an hour. And I also paid for the call, which I didn't think was fair—he should have paid. I'm good on the phone. My view of therapy is that it helps you tell the story of your life to yourself as you're living it, in a way that makes you happier than you might be without it. I don't really believe it's a way of getting to the truth, and I don't believe it can heal you. It teaches you to seize the narrative of your life in a way that makes it better for you. That's what I've gotten out of it. I now have a different view on the events of my life and my participation in them.

PLAYBOY: So you're enjoying a better made-up life than whatever the reality might be?

DUCHOVNY: [*Laughs*] No, no. I tell him the terrible things that I do and he tells me they're not so terrible. "Here, let's look at it this way." There's a therapist named James Hillman who I like very much, and that's his thinking—that the self is a fictional creation anyway. Therapy enables you to seize control of that fictionalization and not be made by other people. If the greatest artwork in life is the creation of who you are, then it's good to apprentice to a good therapist.

My big porn years were the late Eighties. It's like watching sports—it has eras. Was Marilyn Chambers better than Ona Zee?

PLAYBOY: Some people we know do Freudian therapy five days a week.

DUCHOVNY: My dad did that for a while. I can't imagine it. I don't have that much to say. My internal monolog is heavy, but I can't keep talking to somebody like that.

PLAYBOY: With that said, how do you feel about doing interviews?

DUCHOVNY: I get interviewed out. There are only so many interviews I want to do. I get tired of hearing the sound of my voice. I repeat myself, which makes me feel like an imposter. It can send you into a funk.

One of the tricks of interviewing that always kills me is a question like, "Tell me about your acting style." And I'll say, "Well, the kind of acting that I do is blah blah blah." Then that will appear in the article without the question, like I just started talking about my acting style. Why do actors always appear so self-centered? Well, they've got people asking them questions about themselves. It's not their choice to talk about themselves. I would rather talk about other people. It's more interesting to hear about you than to talk about me. I like it when Norman Mailer interviews somebody because it's always about Mailer. You know you're safe with him, because you don't have to talk much about yourself. You'll talk about Mailer's impression of you and how you remind him of him.

Newsweek felt so bad about putting us on the cover that they had to insult us in the article. There was this give-and-take in that article where they asked me, like you did, if *The X-Files* is a religious show. I said, "It's as religious as Howdy Doody." The writer says, "No, but really——" And I go, "Well, it has to do with people having metaphysical yearnings that are no longer answered in traditional ways." Then I see the article and it says, "Duchovny alternates between flip and pretentious." Well, where else could I fall? What were the possibilities for me? You asked me the question, I tried to tell you what I think, you didn't accept that so I tried to answer it in the terms you gave me. And then you present me as an obnoxious high schooler–pretentious former Yale graduate student, putting me in the most clichéd group. After that article I just went, "Fuck it. I'm not going to win this one." So I decided to be quiet. This will be the last interview I'll do for a while. I have no reason to publicize the TV show. I felt loyal to the movie and I wanted to get my face out there. I played that game. But when you see that kind of shit come back at you, it's painful.

PLAYBOY: Whose ideas in this century have intoxicated you?

DUCHOVNY: Freud. Nietzsche. Wallace Stevens. Darwin is probably the most revolutionary thinker and most influential of all time.

PLAYBOY: Would these people be the ones you'd like to have at the proverbial dinner with historical figures?

DUCHOVNY: Nah, you don't know them, they're not famous. You've got to think party. If you have Darwin, Christ and Nietzsche, they're all going to talk at once. You need somebody who listens.

PLAYBOY: Who would you have, then?

DUCHOVNY: Gee. Christ. Buddha. Elvis for a little fame. We'd retire to the drawing room and Elvis would sing a bit. Shakespeare would be interesting because he was an actor; I could talk to him about acting and writing. And the fifth? Who's cooking? Get Wolfgang Puck.

PLAYBOY: So, no women at your table?

DUCHOVNY: That's true. Joan of Arc. Or Anne Hutchinson. Or Anne Boleyn, because she was hot and would have some good gossipy stuff about that time. Typhoid Mary I'd want to talk to, as long as she wouldn't spill.

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beautiful women surrounded the great man on his triumphant tour through the capitals of europe, catering to his every desire, and then ...

The Last Man Of Letters

fiction by

JOYCE CAROL OATES

DESPITE the festive time of year, it had become, for X, a season of numerous discontents. The more acclaimed he was in the public world, the more the myriad imperfections of others, in the private world, offended him.

The imperfections of women, particularly. There were women who offended by making no effort to be feminine—sexually attractive. There were women who offended by making too obvious an effort. As if he, age 73, were an ordinary old fool, a would-be lecher to be galvanized into responding to female subterfuge of any kind.

X had become by degrees an elder literary celebrity of international reputation, a novelist, poet and essayist once called by *The Times Literary Supplement* the "last man of letters"—an exaggeration surely, but one which pleased. He was a perennial candidate for the Nobel Prize and a favorite of many outspoken literary commentators in England and the U.S. In real life, he was larger, more bulky of body than his photographs suggested; still, he had a handsome head, a much-creased but lapidary face with recessed, hooded, haunted-looking eyes, thin white hair brushed back from his forehead in wings. He rarely smiled, his face grown mask-like with thought and calculation. His manners were exquisite, though sometimes rude. He was, his admirers acknowledged, difficult. But a genius, of course. Even before he'd become rich he'd taken care to dress expensively in custom-made suits, white silk shirts, elegant neckties. His nails were manicured, his jaw smoothly shaven, his cologne carefully chosen. There had emerged in the past several months a just-perceptible, infuriating tremor in his left hand, which X controlled by gripping that hand tightly whenever possible. And sometimes, in the early morning, his eyes watered mysteriously, blurring his vision in a maddening way as if unprepared, after the intense, private state of sleep, for contact with the air. But X had never been one to indulge weakness, in himself or in others, and he gave little thought to these matters. Because he'd become famous, he was much photographed; because he'd been much photographed, he became yet more famous. Often, he murmured his name aloud—*X. I am X and no other*. He could not have said if he was proud of such a fate, or humble. From within, the great man may be as much in awe of his greatness as are others. How has it happened? *I am X. I!*

These were secrets of X's inner life, of course. Never shared with another.

Another secret X could not keep from sharing with certain others, his several earlier wives and some of the women with whom, over the decades, he'd become intimate. This was the

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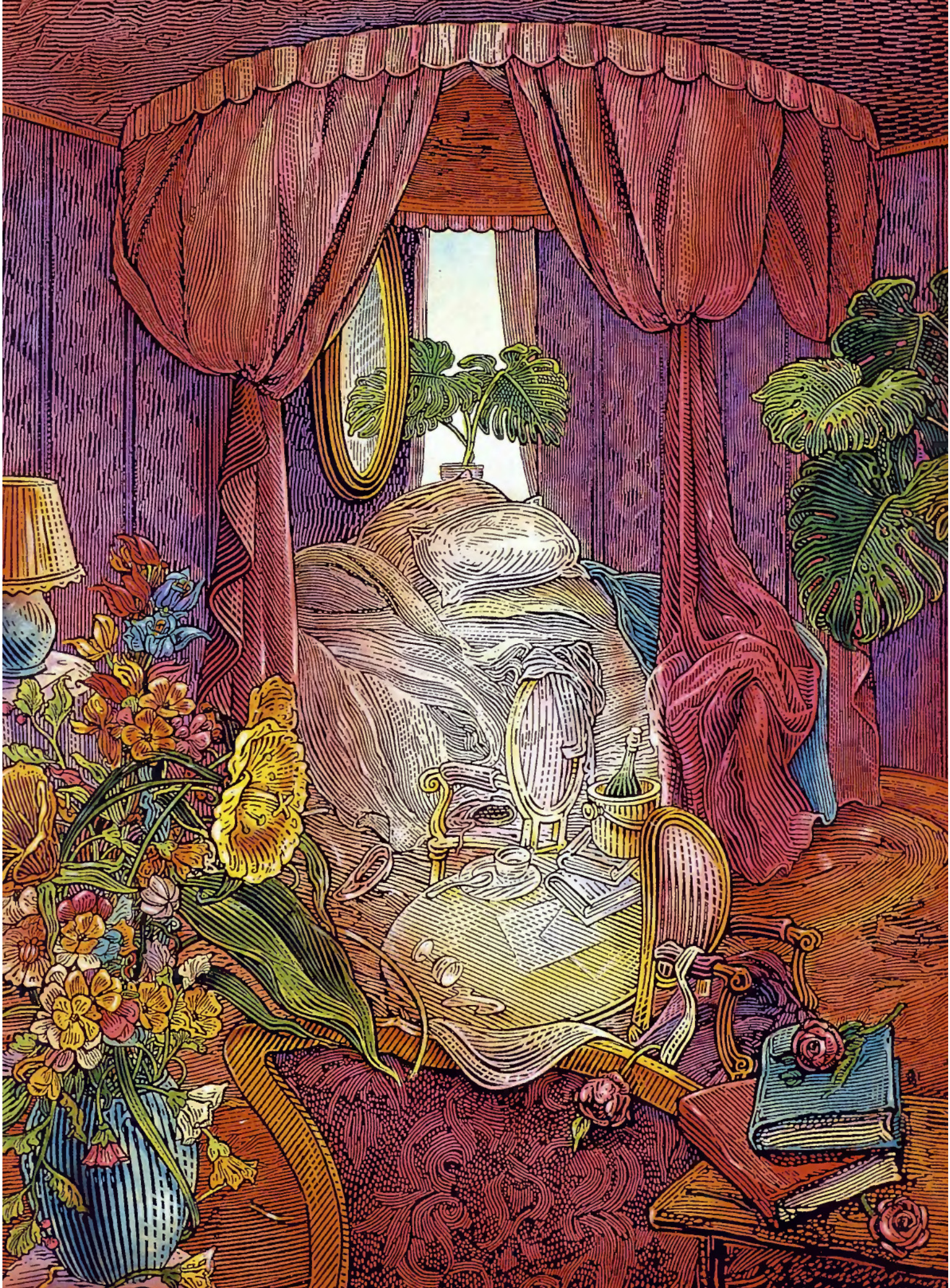

asthmatic condition he'd endured for more than six decades. The attacks varied widely in intensity, having been severe in childhood, intermittent in adulthood and now more or less controlled by medication developed in the past 20 years. Yet sometimes in the middle of the night X woke choking for breath, thrashing about in terror that breath would be denied him—his life would be denied him! He'd badly frightened his most recent wife shortly before leaving on an ambitious European tour to promote his newest book when he'd awoken from a seemingly dreamless sleep convinced he was choking, suffocating. The woman sharing his bed, whom he had not immediately recognized as his wife, had cried, panicked, "What is it? Oh, what is it?"—but even after he'd recovered from the attack, X didn't tell her his secret since childhood. *I'm fighting for my life.*

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Strange, how he took an instant, visceral dislike to the girl.

Her incessant, nervous smile in his presence. Fleshy lips that were too pale, without lipstick. A plain, scrubbed-looking face devoid of makeup. How like a schoolgirl in manner, shy, eager to please, yet her khaki-colored clothes—a loose-fitting jacket and matching trousers—and her lean, boyish body itself seemed to him brazenly unappealing. This girl was of any age between 20 and 30, he supposed; it offended him that his French publisher had chosen her to translate his latest book of essays. In the publisher's office he'd barely nodded at her when they were introduced, and had not heard her last name. His manner conveyed an aristocratic hauteur even as he smiled, uttered witticisms and spoke at length, always compellingly, as if his words were prose and not merely words. At the luncheon in his honor, in an elegant three-star Parisian restaurant tastefully decorated for the Christmas season, he'd avoided sitting near the unattractive girl in khaki, and had not once glanced at her during the course of the meal; yet he heard himself saying coldly, in response to some praise of his new book made by one of the journalists at the table, "Really? But the translation leaves something to be desired, I think. I open the book at random, and I read——" And in his beautifully modulated voice, clear enough to be heard virtually everywhere in the restaurant, X read a passage with seeming spontaneity and subtle, almost playful mockery, in the translator's French, then shut his eyes and recited his own prose, in English. Around the table, his audience of 12 people sat very still, listening in amazement. What a performance! How it would be spoken of, for years afterward! Not once did X glance at the girl translator who, stricken with chagrin, hunched gracelessly, elbows on the table with both hands pressed against her mouth. X was a gentleman, yet he could not mitigate his scorn. "There is no excuse, I think we can agree, for such slovenliness," he said, and shut the book with a snap.

In the embarrassed silence, the girl translator murmured something dazed and unintelligible, whether in English or in French X could not have said, and stumbled away from the table.

X's publisher began to apologize profusely. As did others at the firm. It would require many minutes, and a fresh bottle of 1962 Bordeaux, to bring the distinguished man of letters around to his usual equanimity.

•

You won't readily forget X, will you, my girl? Alone in his luxurious hotel suite, mellow with the afterglow of exquisite wine, X felt a belated tinge of guilt. Seeing again the girl translator's plain, pale face, the fading smile and that look of slow-dawning incredulity and hurt in her eyes. Although it had seemed dramatically spontaneous, X's gesture had been rehearsed; in fact, he'd had to search for some minutes before the luncheon to find a passage from the French edition of his book that might seem to diverge slightly in tone from the original English. (X wondered if perhaps he'd done something like this before, in another language, during an earlier European tour. His performance seemed to him vaguely familiar, like the startled expressions on the faces of his rapt listeners.) He smiled uneasily, thinking of how the tale would be told, and retold, in literary Paris. Swiftly it would make its way to London and New York. X's French publisher had promised that in future editions of X's book, the offending passage would be modified; the several journalists at the luncheon, attached to major Parisian publications, would respectfully report X's penchant for perfectionism. Almost, X felt sorry for the girl translator. She was young, inexperienced, ignorant. It hadn't been entirely her fault, perhaps.

But, after all, X had a reputation to uphold. *The last man of letters.*

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En route to Berlin several days later, X inwardly vowed he wouldn't behave in such a way again, no matter how provoked, for, after all, he was a gentleman. Soon after his arrival, during a press conference at his hotel, he found himself yet another time repelled by a young female—a striking blonde journalist attached to the cultural desk of one of Germany's premiere weekly magazines. This girl journalist was younger even than the French girl translator, or appeared so, and considerably younger than the other interviewers, nearly all of whom were men. X found it difficult to take his eyes off her even when he was answering questions put to him by others, for here was a brazenly attractive female, no doubt one of the new-generation Berliners whom X had heard were professionally ambitious and sexually liberated. Here was a girl well aware of the impression she made upon male eyes. She had long, straight, dyed-blonde hair that fell past her shoulders, and large, staring eyes behind green-tinted glasses, and full, fleshy lips that shone with crimson gloss; she was forever moving her body seductively, and brushing her hair out of her eyes with nervous gestures, and fixing X with a gaze of starstruck adulation so extreme as to seem mocking. And how absurd her costume, resembling a parachutist's jumpsuit of some silvery-steel synthetic fabric, clinging to a thin, perversely erotic body. X felt a shiver of repugnance that a female so blatantly lacking both breasts and hips should present herself in a seductive manner. And her Berlin-accented English grated against his ears. And she was hardly shy, posing questions with the confidence, or more than the confidence, of her fellow interviewers. How did she dare! The girl seemed to pride herself on her ability to speak English, allowing X to know that she traveled often to the States and had stayed for some time in New York—"in Tribeca"—and she'd read "almost every one" of X's books as a college student, in English of course. X stared at the girl interviewer with scarcely concealed fury. There was a tremor in his left eye,

and he was obliged to grip his left hand tightly with his right; someone must have been smoking in the room, for his throat was constricted. How offensive, the way the girl interviewer wetted her lips as she posed a question to X, brushing her shining hair out of her face for the dozenth time, and leaning forward so that the neck of the jumpsuit shifted to reveal the tops of her small waxy-white breasts, naked inside the costume. Worse yet, she had a way of uttering X's full name with heavily accented solemnity, as if the distinguished man of letters were already dead and this was some sort of posthumous occasion honoring him. Unbearable! At last X lost his patience, startling everyone in the room by bringing his fist down hard on a tabletop and saying, with icy courtesy, "Excuse me, Fräulein. Would you please speak English? I am having a most difficult time understanding you."

X had interrupted the blonde girl interviewer in the midst of a lengthy, pretentious question about X's literary forebears and his political leanings, and now she blinked at him in stunned chagrin, startled as if he'd leaned over to slap her arrogant face. There was an abrupt silence in the room. (It seemed to X that the other interviewers glanced at one another with small smiles—they approved, did they, of X's admonishment?) Half a dozen tape cassettes spun in their machines in the awkward stillness.

Then the girl stammered an apology, her face flushed; the press conference resumed, though with more formality and hesitancy; no one wished to offend X but posed to him questions of a sort he encountered everywhere in Europe, to which he answered with his usual balance of wit and sobriety, casualness and elegance. At the conclusion of the hour, everyone applauded, everyone, with the conspicuous exception of the blonde girl, who'd sat silent and hunched in her chair as others spoke, staring at X's feet, twisting a strand of hair and bringing it to her mouth unconsciously, like an overgrown, hurt child. As the others politely shook X's hand in farewell and thanked him for the privilege of the interview, the girl retreated without a word and was gone. X frowned after her, annoyed. It would only have been good manners for her to come forward and apologize, after all. It was clear that the new generation of German youth lacked the courtesy of their elders. X had noticed, too, belatedly, with a small tinge of regret, that the girl had brought with her a duffel bag that was no doubt crammed with books of X's she'd hoped for him to sign, but she'd crept away without asking him to sign even one. So rude.

Also in Berlin, X was vexed by the publicist assigned to him during his visit, a fleshy, perfumy girl in an alarmingly short vinyl miniskirt, black textured stockings and shiny black boots to midthigh, who, in the limousine in which they traveled together from appointment to appointment, was forever chattering on her cellular phone. Yet he maintained a dignified composure and made no complaint of her apart from a casual, glancing remark to the head of the publishing house about the amusing resemblance between the professional class of young Berlin women and "women for hire." In Berlin, as throughout Germany, X was treated with the respect due one of his stature; as his German agent pointed out, sales of X's books were high and steady. In Stockholm, in Copenhagen, in Amsterdam and at last in Rome, at the conclusion of his itinerary, X was treated royally, and so made an effort to bear in stoic silence, as much as he could, the grating imperfections of girl translators, girl interviewers, girl publicists and even, outrageously, girl editors—for it was quite a shock to X to discover that the editor at his Italian publisher who'd overseen his books for 20 years had retired and been replaced by an exuberant young Milanese woman of no more than 35, a specialist in American literature who'd taken courses at Columbia and whose name was something like Tonia, or Tanya. X took an immediate dislike to this girl editor, whose complexion appeared slightly coarse and whose long face and nose were so recognizably Italian; he disapproved of makeup on one so homely and wondered if the single gold ring on her left hand was a wedding band—or was X supposed to play a sort of guessing game, not knowing if she was married or not? Though Tonia, or Tanya, was deferential to the distinguished elder writer, he resented her familiarity with his books, as if, knowing his books, she somehow knew *him*, forever quoting, in the presence of others, from X's writing, as if he were a revered authority on literature, politics, morals and the very universe. Nothing more vulgar than fulsome flattery! Almost, X wondered if Tonia, or Tanya, was deliberately making him out to be, by her excessive homage, a pompous old fool. "Enough, please!" X several times protested, but his distress was misinterpreted by the girl as old-fashioned humility, or shyness; she persisted in her enthusiasm, until X had all he could do to listen in pained silence. It annoyed him, too, that Tonia, or Tanya, should exhibit such a general zest for American writers, including on her list even notorious feminists who had, for political reasons, long ago denounced X. Had she no sense? Had she no embarrassment? X was particularly incensed when she introduced him as "the greatest American writer of his generation." *American only? Of his generation only?* As if X's achievements had not lifted him well above the mere provincial and time-bound. X felt the sting of this insult as if the arrogant young woman had reached over to tweak his nose, but he bore his displeasure in dignified silence until at last, on the eve of his departure from Rome, two days before Christmas, at a small, elegant dinner in his honor, when the girl editor began again to quote him in her proprietary, maddening way, X turned to his host, the wealthy owner of the publishing house, and said in a voice clear and penetrating enough to be heard about the table, "Excuse me! I am so very weary of chattering sycophants, I believe I would like to be driven back to my hotel."

How silent everyone was, at once. How like magic X's effect upon these strangers. He did not deign to glance at the stunned girl editor but was well aware of the incredulity and hurt in her eyes. And so, dramatically, there came to an end X's European itinerary, the last publicity tour of his career.

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You won't readily forget X, will you, my girl?

X smiled to himself as, in his luxurious suite at the top of the Spanish Steps, he prepared somewhat distractedly for bed and for an early awakening in the morning. Yet he was incensed, still, insulted. His dinner had not agreed with him, nor the several glasses of chianti, an artery throbbed in his head, and his breath was short as if he'd been running. The indignities he'd had to bear on this European trip were outrageous for one of his stature and age! No doubt there was, in his wake, a flurry of anecdotes, in time to become literary legends; much would be embellished and exaggerated. But such was unavoidable, for X was, after all, a famous man; about famous men, all sorts of wild legends accrue. He was an artist, a creator, like Picasso, Beethoven—a man of unpredictable moods; a man of genius, of course, and genius must be indulged, not stifled.

X had been driven back to the hotel in his host's limousine, accompanied by the contrite, apologetic man, and though X had of course accepted his publisher's apologies for the tactless behavior of an employee, X was well aware that the girl editor herself had retreated from the table in mortified silence, no doubt to a women's room to repair the damage done to her vanity;

"I really enjoyed the dinner. Now is there any way I can thank you ladies?"

but she'd made no effort to follow after X, to explain and to apologize. X wondered if it might be time to instruct his Italian agent to find another publisher for his books, one more congenial to his needs.

So you will soon see, X is not to be treated lightly.

This prospect would ordinarily have placated X, for through his career he had derived considerable pleasure from making abrupt switches from publisher to publisher, and indeed he'd switched literary agents several times. But, happening to turn on an overhead fluorescent light in his bathroom, he was shocked to see how exhausted, how sallow, how aged he looked. *Is that X? Dear God!* X's heart thudded as if a cruel prank had been played on him. Like many individuals of a certain age, he had long practiced the technique of what might be called the discreet angle; he seemed to know by instinct which mirrors would glare out at him and which would soothe his eyes; in his imagination, it was not a mirror reflection he saw when picturing himself, but his most frequently reprinted publicity photograph, which showed a handsome white-haired gentleman with sensitive eyes, a wide, thought-creased brow and a sympathetic expression. But now, in the bathroom mirror, what did he see but a ghastly frog-face, sunken eyes and quivering jowls and a pug nose with dark, hairy nostrils! *Is that X? No, it cannot be.* All along, others, including women, had gazed openly upon this face, while he himself had been spared; but now he saw his own true face, in the fluorescent glare of a bathroom mirror in Rome, and the sight of it made him sway with dizziness, nausea. He slammed the flat of his hand against the mirror and cried, "I deserve better. I deserve your respect. How dare you insult me!"

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Though X was exhausted, as exhausted as he'd ever been in his life, and though the enormous canopied bed was as comfortable a bed as he'd ever lain in, he had difficulty sleeping; his brain swirled with vivid, hallucinatory images and shrill snatches of voices and laughter. His dinner weighed heavily in his stomach, and the wine he'd drunk, against doctor's orders—for X took blood-pressure medication—made his temples ache and his heart pound in a wayward, lurching manner. As often at such times when, in a foreign city amid luxurious surroundings, he was suffused with a sense of regret, melancholy, guilt; for what exactly, he didn't know; for having quarreled with his wife, perhaps, before leaving on the tour; for having refused to take her with him; even as, in his confused state, he had to acknowledge that he didn't clearly recall which wife, which woman, this was; on a previous European tour he'd fallen in love with a woman some years younger than he, and he'd divorced his wife to marry this woman. But precisely which woman she was, and whether she preceded, or succeeded, one or two other women who resembled her, he didn't know; the effort of trying to make sense of it exhausted him and disgusted him. *What do I care for the merely personal life? I am destined for higher things.* With a start, he recalled that he had children scattered about the world, not only grown but frankly middle-aged children, and there was something repulsive about middle-aged children, something very unnatural; could he be responsible for squabbling offspring, must he be their father forever? Why should he, X, who'd labored so hard to create a reputation, to amass a modest fortune, provide them with the charity they seemed to think they deserved? As if, crouched forever in X's shadow, deprived of natural sunshine, these hulking, overgrown children possessed no volition of their own, no souls. *Leave me alone! I don't know a single one of you.*

Suddenly the dark of the unfamiliar bedroom was shattered by a gaily ringing phone close beside X's bed. X fumbled to answer, stunned, groggy, yet relieved, for he'd had enough of his miserable thoughts; this was his last night in Rome, his last night in Europe, and he deserved better. The call was from the hotel's room service, a heavily accented Italian voice inquiring if the signore would accept a midnight treat from admirers of his books; X heard himself say, with childlike eagerness, "Yes, good! Send it up, please, at once," though the suite was already filled with virtually untouched holiday gift bottles of wine, champagne, liqueur, expensive pâté and cheeses, as well as enormous, cloyingly fragrant floral displays of the kind suitable for a funeral home. Quickly X climbed out of bed, struggled into his silk dressing gown, squinted into a mirror and made a swipe at brushing back his disheveled, filmy-pale hair from his flushed forehead. Here was a more flattering mirror, softened by lamplight, providing a more authentic portrait of the distinguished writer. Even as X stumbled into the other room he heard a low rapid knocking at the door, for already the room service delivery was there; he heard, too, curious muffled voices and giggles in the corridor. Excitedly he called, "Yes, thank you, I am here!"

Opening the door then to see to his surprise that the bellboy was not a male after all, but a female, though wearing the old-fashioned olive-gray livery of the renowned hotel, with rows of buttons and gold brocade, and a visored cap perched rakishly on her head. Why, it was the girl editor of X's Italian publishing house whom, only an hour or so ago, X had denounced as a chattering sycophant! Tonia, or Tanya, clearly wanted to make restitution, to apologize; her skin was no longer coarse or displeasing to the eye but glowed with cosmetics, and her thick, black Italian hair was loose, in tendrils and wisps falling seductively to her shoulders. Even as, in exuberant high spirits, Tonia, or Tanya, flashed a dazzling smile at the elder writer, crying, "Signor X, may we come in? We have such Christmas surprises!" X understood that he would forgive her.

How dreamlike and confused and deliriously wonderful it was, X's surprise midnight treat, like nothing else he had experienced in more than 70 years of existence: And only a few minutes before, how self-pitying, how morbid he'd been! He stood back in awe as the Italian girl editor and another attractive female in bellboy livery pushed an ornate silver cart of the approximate size of a hospital gurney into the sitting room; the cart was heaped with delicacies—an unusually large bottle of champagne in a gilt-embossed wrapper not familiar to X's eye, goose-liver pâté and gourmet cheeses and crusty breads, chocolate-covered truffles, bonbons, cashews and pistachio nuts, and remarkable fruits of all varieties: great glossy apples, blood oranges, fat black grapes, plums and kiwis, classically proportioned and in colors vivid as a still life by Matisse. X saw to his astonishment that the Italian girl's companion was the Fräulein with the long, shimmering, dyed-blonde hair who'd interviewed him in Berlin! The first several buttons of her jacket were unbuttoned to show the alluring tops of her pale, perfect little breasts, and she too flashed a dazzling smile at X, as if she and he were old friends, sharing delicious secrets. At once, his heart swelling with magnanimity, X forgave the brash Fräulein, too. "Yes, of course! Please come in," he stammered, laughing in delight.

It occurred to X that, through his long, blessed life, in such instances of surprise and confusion, he'd stood by helplessly as others, nearly always women, took charge.

And now a third young female in bellboy costume appeared, helping to push the cart, and yet a fourth! The heavy door was shut, amid giggles high-pitched and silvery as the tinkling

(continued on page 211)

INSIDE THE PLAYBOY MANSION

an appreciation of the world's most exclusive resort

By BILL ZEHME

And so one man created two houses and all men would forever want to go to these houses, to be inside. Last time I was inside, at the second house, desperate men outside were trying to climb the towering walls to get in. It was a Party night, so they could not be blamed—prosecuted perhaps, but never blamed. I remember nights in Chicago when I stood outside of the first house, staring, imagining, wanting in so bad. I stood outside the iron gates, a dream-drunk college dope, and thought of something the man who lived in that house would often recall: "I remember, in the days prior to the magazine," he had liked to confess, "walking the streets of Chicago late at night, looking at the lights in the high-rises and very much wanting to be a part of 'the good life' I thought the people in those buildings must be leading." This was consolation, of course, small but reassuring enough. I thought: *Even he understands! This exquisite torment—he knows!* Then again, that which was once considered urban good life had, in this very home, under the roof and the sway of this man called Hefner, become Good Life supernova. More than that even. I think of the phrase coined by one beloved habitué of both houses, the eminent historian Max Lerner, who would survey life on the premises, east and west, and duly exult: *"Pretty goddamned fucking marvelous!"* Well, yes, but understatement still.

Oh, to be at Hef's! This is all any grown boy, sound of mind and libido, *(text continued on page 204)*

COMEDIAN

DICK GREGORY

on

BEING WELCOMED TO THE MANSION

You have to go back to that era, the eorly Sixties, and reolize how big Playboy was. Crowds would stond across the street just to wotch people go into the Playboy Club. Now, 99.9 percent of the people ot the Playboy Club didn't even know where the Mansion was, so to be able to leave the Club and go to the Mansion—as o black, I'd only witnessed this in movies when I wos o child. I never reolized that meat came thot large. I wos owed. And there was olways plenty. There wos no such thing as, you get there ot four in the morning and the plates are almost empty. The people there were so nice; I guess they took on the atmosphere of the Mansion. I was there mony times ond I never sow onyone orgue, never sow anyone drunk—and the whiskey flowed like woter. You might have something depressing on your mind. But when you got there it just disoppeored. To be able to sit and look at people in the swimming pool, through the window in the Underwoter Bar, like you were looking at o television set, was incredible. It was o great port of my life and it prepored me for going around the world, meeting with kings and queens and going into palaces. I could say, "Well, you know, it's o lovely place you have, but I hove been here before."

O come, all ye faithful: Hef threw a Playmate Holiday House Party to commemorate PLAYBOY's eighth anniversary. Decking his halls were (left ond below) Sheralee Conners, Kathy Douglas, Linda Gamble, Joni Mattis, Joyce Nizzari, Carrie Radison, Elaine Reynolds, Elizabeth Ann Roberts, Susie Scott, Teddi Smith, Christa Speck ond Delores Wells.

They came, they saw, they partied: The Chicago Mansion showed the show business elite where the action truly was. Sixties status quo an view for the enchanted likes of Tony Curtis or young chanteuse Barbra Streisand might include bikinied Bunnies twisting up the Ballroom or lesser-clad indoor pool enthusiasts making a memorable splash just one heavenly floor below.

PLAYBOY EXECUTIVE

DICK ROSENZWEIG

on

THE JUSTICE'S WIFE'S TOUR OF THE MANSION

Through one of the organizations I was involved with in Chicago, I met Justice Potter Stewart, who was on the Supreme Court for many years, and someone asked if I would give his wife a tour of the Mansion. This was during the day, and as I was taking her down to show her the pool, I heard some kind of laughing and scratching going on. We got downstairs and there was Shel Silverstein, nude, with two, three or four nude Playmates, or maybe Bunnies, in the pool. I honest to God did not know what to do. I think I turned white. Mrs. Stewart, on the other hand, was completely ready for this. That's what she expected to see. It was very funny, actually, though it didn't seem funny then. There was no reaction at all from Shel and the girls. First of all, they didn't know who she was. And second, they couldn't have cared less.

Caress firepole, slide and gain abrupt entrance to the subterranean Underwater Bar, where intimate moments (see Hef, below, amid plush pillows, with companions) could be spied via the pool picture window—and, of course, vice versa.

Attention indoor sports fans: Pillow fights forthcoming. The Mansion, considered the "eighth or ninth wonder of the world" by the *Chicago Tribune*, was much more than a premiere party palace. Aside from Hef, many local Bunnies slept here—in a reasonably priced and conveniently situated, upstairs Bunny Dorm safe haven.

And oh, the amenities: Steamy sun-worshipers could happily cleanse and bake, just off poolside—as demonstrated, herewith, by Playmates Nizzori, Roberts, Smith, Wells and Speck.

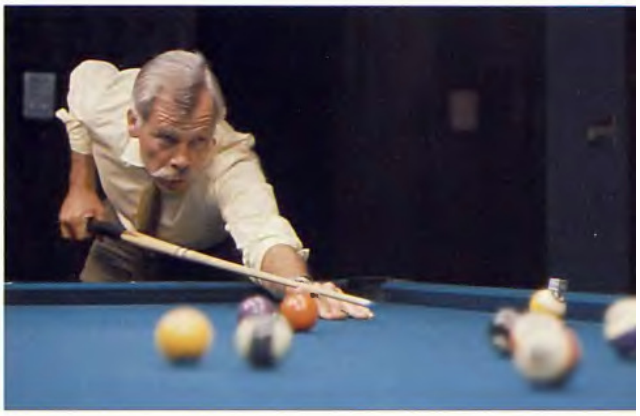
PLAYMATE BUNNY

PATTI REYNOLDS

on

CELEBS AT THE MANSION

We girls were really, really popular. I met Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Dale Robertson, Tony Bennett and Warren Beatty at the Mansion. Went out with Warren. He was good. But Vic Damone, he was better.



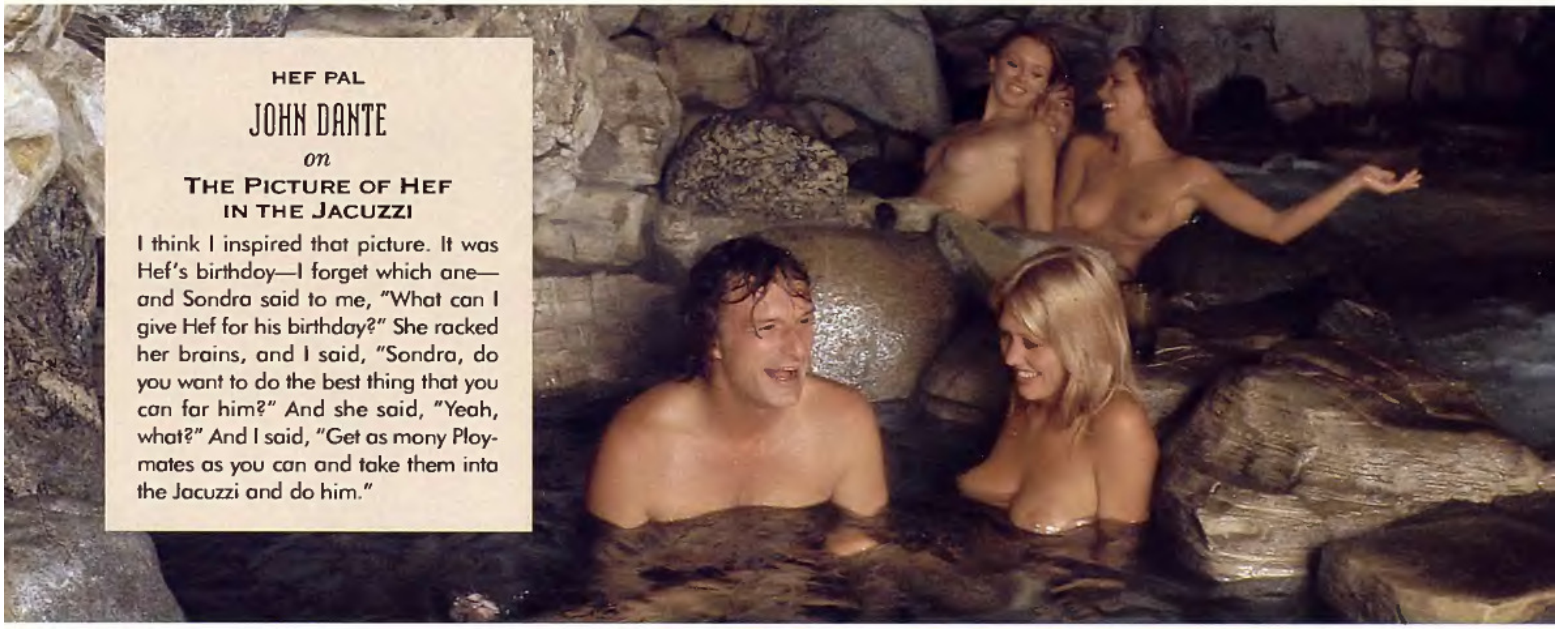
Hef's famous round, rotating bed—"the biggest, raundest bed in the history of the warld," enthused Tom Wolfe—made his persanal world turn at the touch af a button. "It gaes 33⅓, 45 and 78!" Hef liked to say, althaugh it was aften weighted dawn by magazine layouts, calar slides and page praafs. Elsewhere, guests played—such as Lee Marvin in the Game Raam. Then, in 1972, the Rolling Stones memorably starmed the premises; right, Hef with Jumpin' Jack Flash, Mick Jagger.

HEF
on
THE STONES' VISIT

The night the Stones arrived, I had a long talk with Mick Jagger about American politics. Keith Richards, by contrast, was entirely out of it every time I saw him. Bill Wyman possessed a justly famous passion for girls, but he cantained himself lang enough for me ta teach him backgammon. But the Stones hadn't come for politics or backgammon. They came for girls, and a great many girls came for them. One Bunny told this story: "I saw Mick at poolside, wearing one of those shorty robes, and I was struck dumb. He asked if the cat had my tongue, and I blurted out, 'I want to bite your ass.' He laughed and flipped up his robe and said, 'Have at it, love' and I did." Bobbie Arnstein told of Mick Jagger's wandering into her room with sex on his mind. She said she was tempted, but she'd been eating cheese, and when he kissed her she pushed him away because she feared her breath smelled awful. Jagger tumbled onta a chair, which happened to contain a birthday cake. Babbie last saw him slinking out of her roam with gaoey white icing over his leather-clad pasterior.

As a child, Hef was farbidden by his Methadist parents ta go to movies an Sundays. "Naturally," he admits, laughing, "Sunday became movie night at the Mansian." The popcarn icanoclast and his "special lady" (above, Mary Warren) cuddled in a launger built far twa, surrounded by friends. Right, Hef with Mary's predecessor, Playmate Danna Michelle.

Westward ho! By the late Sixties, Hef was lured to Las Angeles to host TV's *Playboy After Dark*, on which he discavered ladylove Barbi Bentan, who, in 1971, faund far him an exclusive estate in Holmby Hills which became Playboy Mansian West. Quite naturally, essential Seventies sybaritism ensued: Above left, in the Mansian's Great Hall (foreground), Ploymate Lynnda Kimball and Rat Packer Peter Lawford connect. Abave right, angel faad pop-up Playmate Christine Maddax gives Hef, with Barbi, one af his 48th-birthday surprises.



HEF PAL

JOHN DANTE

on

THE PICTURE OF HEF IN THE JACUZZI

I think I inspired that picture. It was Hef's birthday—I forget which ane—and Sondra said to me, "What can I give Hef for his birthday?" She racked her brains, and I said, "Sondra, do you want to do the best thing that you can far him?" And she said, "Yeah, what?" And I said, "Get as many Playmates as you can and take them into the Jacuzzi and do him."

First order of business at Mansion West: Build a swimming paal and Jacuzzi Gratto. The results resemble a natural lake and underwater cave, where Hef and free-spirited guests cauld, and did, indulge their fantasies.

The Good Life in L.A. was lived largely outdoors. At left, cosually clad (and unclod) onlookers wotch Hef challenge bockgammon pro John Rockwell. Below right, sunseekers assemble ot poolside. Above, pajamo party porticipants—Morcy Honson and Missy Cleveland—odorn Hef and Shel Silverstein.

Guests in the West come from all wolks. Porn star Linda Lovelace (obove) ond her husbond stayed at the Mansion while house hunting; the Greatest, boxing legend and Chicago pal Muhammad Ali (below), stopped by to film a TV commerciol on the premises, with Hef's blessings.

The wet and the wild: At left, Sondra Theodore, Hef's main squeeze from late 1976 to 1981, takes an exuberant impromptu plunge from cavetop waterfall. Below, Playmates Sheila Mullen, Hope Olson, Lisa Sohm, Laura Lyons, Sondra and Denise Michele absorb some local color while taking a break from taping *Playboy's Playmate Party*, which was a 1977 sweeps week ratings champ for ABC-TV.

Tennis court turned roller disco for Hef (left) and flanking Playmates Terri Welles, Candace Collins and Victoria Cooke. At right, UCLA coed Nancy Amons carries the torch for Hef's 1979 (Nude) Birthday Olympics, one of many elaborate celebrations staged by his pals. At bottom left, Mansion secretary Becky Strick breaks up as Hef interrupts the serious business of her Playmate test shoot, and (below), Mansionettes Terrie Congie, Hope Olson, Nicki Thomas and Sue Fiskin conspire to make a quartet of beautiful moonbeams.

The Village People (left) ignite a televised 25th anniversary party, as Darothy Stratten, Susan Kiger and Sondra Theadare nuzzle the host above. Below, beautiful music, Barbi style.

A quarter century's warth of Playmate pulchritude avertook Mansion West in September 1979, commemarating PLAYBOY's 25th anniversary with a gala Playmate Reunion—which Hef considers ta this day "ane of the fondest memaries of my entire life." "Without yau," Hef said ta the assemblage, "I'd have a literary magazine." Amang the 136 Playmates who graced the hamecaming weekend were the 11 Playmates of the Year posing with the faunder of the feast. From left, they are (frant row) Cyndi Waod, Manique St. Pierre, Debra Ja Fandren, Liv Lindeland and Linda Gamble; (second raw) Cannie Kreski, Claudia Jennings, Lillian Müller, Ja Callins, Allisan Parks and Lisa Baker.

PLAYMATE

SONDRA THEODORE

on

SHARING HEF

I was treated pretty badly by a lat af the girls who are naw my very close friends. They saw me as a threat and pulled same pretty mean tricks an me. I learned to deal with it, and eventually they were forced ta see I wasn't this conniving little chick trying ta steal Hef. So we cut through all that and had many great evenings hanging out together. It made Hef sa happy to see that the girls could, believe it or not, get alang and deal with the situatian. I said ta the ather girls, "Well, if we lave him, we will try to make him happy, and he likes harmany." Sa we warked it out, but it was the most difficult task to canquer about being Hef's girlfriend.

The Seventies return! After a decade of devoted family life, the legendary Mansion madness is back in full swing, replete with Playmates prowling the grounds. For Hef's 72nd birthday bash, disco fever burned eternal: Above left, Hef and his physician buddy, Mark Saginor, strike Travolta poses with partners Jaime Bergman and Devon Larsh. At top right, actor Billy Zane panders the paw of one Regency monkey standing sentry in the Great Hall. Above right, Playmate Julie McCullough takes a sly lick from the Disco birthday cake.

Driving Miss Millennium: Playboy jump-started the new century with a wide-ranging search for the Millennium Playmate. The Playboy 2000 Bus, a photo studio on wheels, got a gala send-off at Mansion West from Hef and Playmates galore (above). In the meantime, Hollywood heartthrob Leonardo DiCaprio (below left) is among the new breed of regulars to Mansion Life, where Hef, as ever, keeps dancing into the future.

HEF'S EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

MARY O'CONNOR

on

THE RETURN OF THE PLAYMATES

I love having the Playmates back up at the Mansion. It's the vitality of it, how pretty they are. For me, it's invigorating. It makes me feel young. The Playmates make everything come alive, with all their craziness and everything, and the way they dress, and their little psyches. And I missed that the mast when it shut down. Naw that it's caming back, it's wonderful. Today Julia Schultz was aut in the driveway dusting off her new car. So we all had to look aut the window at the car. And she came up to the office to say hi. We haven't had Playmates up here for nine years. It just was wonderful. In the old days, I even loved the promiscuity. I thought it was fun. If you want to go ta bed with somebody the first time you're aut with him, I think you shauld da it.

PLAYMATE

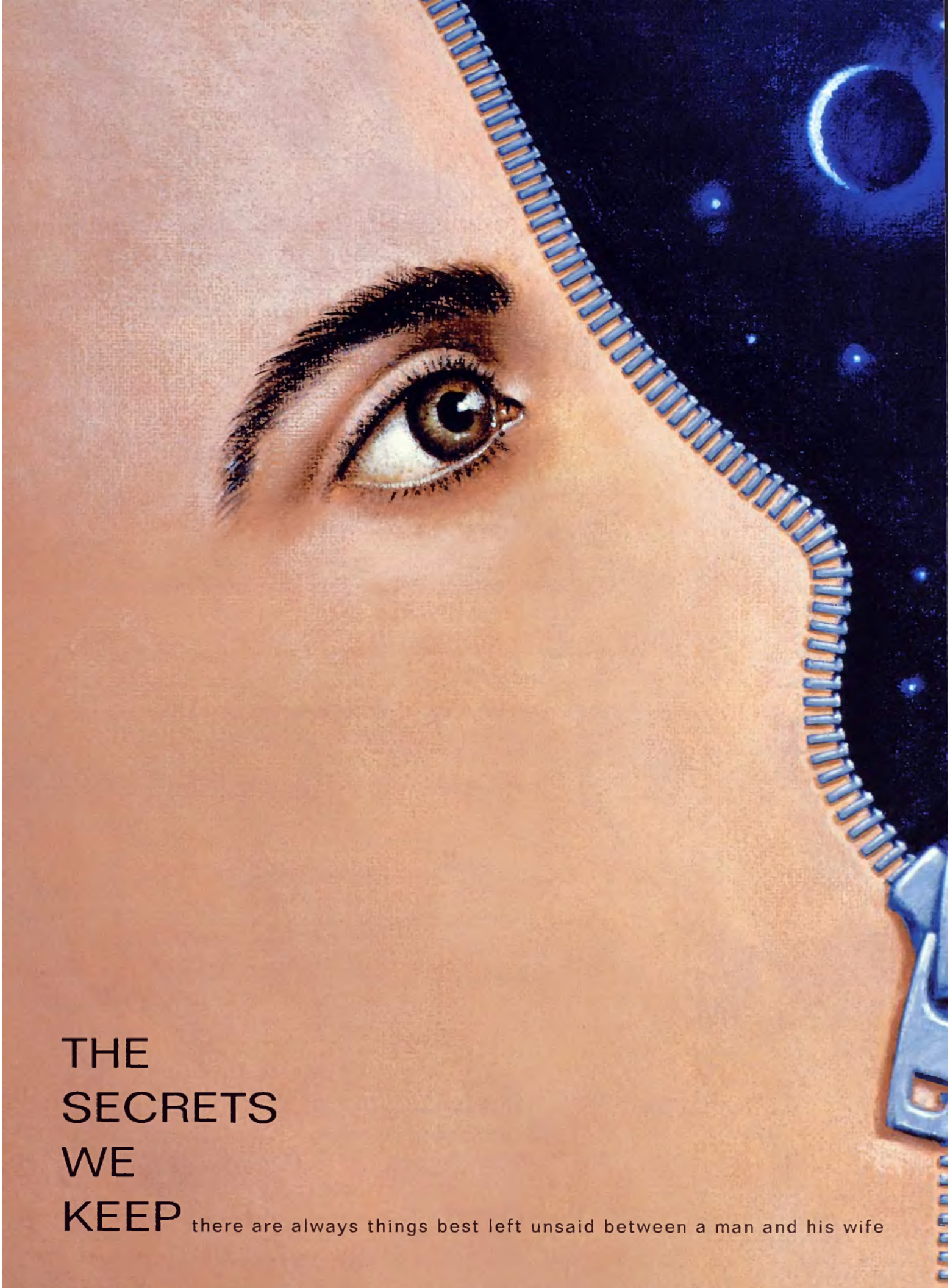
JULIE MC CULLOUGH

observes

HEF ON THE TOWN

The interesting thing is, now everything old is new ogoin, so to speok. A lot of stuff thot wos populor woy bock—swing doncing, Twenties ond Thirties ond Forties music—is populor ogoin. So, of oll times for Hef to be getting out on the nightlife scene, this is o good one becouse the stuff he likes is bock in vogue. The old movies, the old styles of music ond doncing ore o revelotion for young people. Very populor. And it's omozing the number of women who wont to jump Hefner oll the time. When he goes out, he's like—wow!—totolly surrounded by women. But I think he'll slow down from that o little bit, too. He's just getting out ond seeing the world, ond once he's seen it, I think he'll stort hoving people come to him ogoin.

The Mansion's signature pajoma porty, the Midsummer Night's Dreom, returned to Holmby Hills this year with a bong—and o star-studded guest list. Top right, octor Jim Correy, octress Brande Roderick ond twins Mondy ond Sondy Bentley join Hef. Above, actresses Tori Spelling (left) ond Comeron Diaz (right) join the party. (Also present were Tori's porents, Aaron ond Candy Spelling; actors George Clooney, Jeff Goldblum, Motthew Perry and DiCoprio, TV hosts Jerry Springer ond Bill Maher, ond scores of other celebs.) Above center, the world's slinkiest conga line soshoys through the tent set up on the Mansion lawn. Below, Hef with three of his fovorite componions.


THE
SECRETS
WE
KEEP
there are always things best left unsaid between a man and his wife

In a little-known story of Ferenc Molnár's (familiar only to a small group of discerning Hungarians), an elderly couple, vacationing at the seaside, reflects on the pleasures and travails of a long and rewarding marriage.

Lulled into carelessness by the ocean breeze, the husband makes a confession:

"You've always suspected that I had an affair with the greengrocer's daughter. And I've always maintained that my attentions to her were innocent. Well . . . now it can be told. I *did* have an affair with her."

His 90-year-old wife nods, considers

article by Bruce Jay Friedman

PAINTING BY RAFAL OLBINSKI

this, then suddenly lunges forward and with her two remaining teeth bites off the end of his nose.

The husband was fortunate not to have lost the tip of an appendage more delicate than his nose. His mistake was that he had ignored a basic rule of love and marriage: Not only is full disclosure between men and women unnecessary, but it can also have disastrous consequences. Secrets, on the other hand, are the glue or lubricant—take your pick—that have kept many an affair or marriage humming along nicely and without incident. The marriage contract entreats newlyweds to love, honor and obey (a retro touch), but nowhere is it stated that every thought and activity, perverted or otherwise, has to be put immediately on record.

How can it possibly enrich the life of your wife or lover to know that in celebration of a successful deal, you once rented out an entire bordello in Cuernavaca for the weekend? And in what way does it benefit you, for that matter, to be informed that in her college days, your beloved was known as Easy Amy? Or that she still services an occasional deliveryman, albeit presidentially?

Such revelations, no matter how innocently put forth, can only sting and injure—and should be kept buried, to be produced only in emergencies. The last two lovers who were able successfully to share secrets about their respective affairs were Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir; neither, it must be noted, was a beauty. A case could be made that such individuals should not be allowed to have sex at all.

Confession may be good for the soul, but among lovers it can be bad for the cojones. Secrets can be revealed in relative safety in the confessional booth—or on the analyst's couch—though not necessarily.

An old friend of mine, whose therapist had died, decided to continue his treatment with a female, since his questionable lifestyle had never been held up to the light of a woman's point of view. During his first session, he confessed that on several occasions he had slept with his brother's wife. "How *could* you," the therapist said, a look of revulsion on her face. "That's disgusting and only a real swine would sink that low."

Once you're comfortable with the idea of keeping an occasional secret from your wife or lover, there is no need to slip around furtively as if you're an ex-employee of Stasi. It isn't as if you've been sworn to *omertà* by a roomful of individuals named Vinnie. Nor do you need to clasp your hands behind your back, bounce up and down on your toes and wear a smug expression that says: "I know something that you don't." You are not a 12-year-old girl. And you absolutely want to avoid throwing out tantalizing hints about your secret, such as "I'll bet you think I'm attracted to your friend Marcia. Well, you're wrong. I'm not."

To use the phrase that's come back into prominence after years of neglect: Be cool. You have a few secrets. Big deal. All that has happened is that you've decided there are certain areas of your life—the hidden bank accounts in Costa Rica, a lust for CNN anchorwomen—that are better left undiscussed.

An intelligent wife or lover will never press you for intimate details of your life. Only someone who truly hates you will need to know everything you did—and with whom you did it.

But now and then, even the most sensitive and caring partner will express curiosity about your activities and ask a potentially dangerous question—related, as an example, to an out-of-town trip.

"What did you do with yourself at night, big guy?"

At such an incendiary moment—and with a loaded question in the air—it's essential to have on hand several responses that are truthful *as far as they go* but do not, of course, tell the entire (and perhaps disgraceful) story.

Two replies that have been known to be effective:

"I hung out."

"I bounced around."

Both have the appeal of being succinct. Each has a thin coating of truth to it. Either one will buy you time until the state of emergency is lifted.

No doubt you did hang out. And in the process, you did indeed bounce around. The fact that the individual you hung out with was a desirable nubile and that it was her four-poster bed you both bounced around on are details that are best not stated for they can only serve to clutter your story. Sexually speaking, there is no need to dot all the i's, etc. What does matter is that you've come forward boldly with a smattering of truth—and that you haven't been caught lying through your teeth, which, as Americans, we all know is unappealing.

Your wife, or lover, will have her own stock of demitruths to explain away her whereabouts and behavior. If she says she spent the afternoon with a friend, leave it at that. Don't insist on knowing who the friend was, how they amused themselves and why she has a mysterious flushed look on her face. A detailed account might spoil your day.

A wealthy acquaintance of mine insisted on knowing everything about his young wife's early sex life and was not satisfied by her assurances that she did "the things that any normal, healthy single girl would do."

Finally, she could no longer tolerate his badgering.

"If you must know," she informed him, "I was considered the best blow job in San Diego."

Shaken but undaunted, he foolishly insisted on knowing how he compared with her previous lovers.

"Let me see," she said, giving the matter some thought. "I'd say you're the 14th best lay I've ever had."

•

"Are you married?"

This is the question being asked stubbornly—and irritatingly—by attractive women in bars, and it's usually accompanied by a veiled threat: Say yes and you're dead in the water.

Here again, a reply that falls a bit short of full disclosure can be useful.

Two that might help keep your oars in the water are:

"That depends on your definition of marriage."

"Oh, I'm married all right." (Pause here for a long, anguished sigh.) "If you want to call it a marriage."

Another possibility is to do an end around, which falls somewhere between admission and denial:

"Aren't most people married these days?"

There is also the fib-that-really-isn't, a response that might have its origin in the Oval Office:

"I'm separated at the moment." (This can be said with all sincerity—especially if your wife is at home watching *Frasier* reruns.)

A lighthearted reply can often work wonders:

"I guess you could say I'm a little married."

Intrigued by this amusing response, a buxom young charmer might ask at that point if you are happily married, setting the stage for a classic example of sophisticated fudging:

"Who among us knows what happiness is?"

And finally, you might be tempted to throw up your hands and, disregarding the consequences, make a full disclosure—often with a surprising result:

HE: "I'm about as married as you can get."

SHE: "Oh, good, I only date married men."

Two other scenarios in which you might want to shade your real feelings:

SHE [*showing up with a weird hairstyle*]: "What do you think?"

HE: "You should have done it years ago." (Translation: It's much too late to do it now.)

SHE [*seeing a gorgeous young thing enter*

(concluded on page 194)

"Ho, Ho, Ho . . . !"

WOR

PERSONAL TRAINER TIM GROVER HELPED MICHAEL JORDAN MUSCLE-UP TO FACE NBA TOUGH GUYS—HIS TIPS WILL HELP YOU, TOO

FITNESS

BY BOB CONDOR

ANYONE WHO followed the Chicago Bulls' six world championship runs in eight seasons—and even those who didn't—witnessed legendary basketball and the dominating reign of Michael Jordan. As impressive as Jordan's on-court heroics and role as team mentor is his capacity for not playing his age. Jordan, who turns 36 in February, outhustled and outlasted much younger opponents throughout the NBA's 82-game marathon. He always seemed to recover quickly for the next big game. Energy was rarely a problem.

Credit the wisdom and custom workouts of personal trainer Tim Grover. Jordan hired Grover in 1989 to create a fitness regimen that would help him withstand the relentless pounding of NBA play. Grover also trains Scottie Pippen and Ron Harper, who successfully battled injury and are playing past the age of 30.

Grover's insights can help you perform better in your favorite game or simply feel sharper for an important meeting. Using his ideas, you may experience fewer tired days and sleep-deprived nights. You will recover quicker from intense workouts. You can boost your energy and lessen the risk of injury. You'll never be able to fly like Jordan, but what would you do with all that money, anyway?

Recently Grover talked with us at Chicago's Athletic Club at Illinois Center, where he trains. Here are his tips:

LOSE THE ATTITUDE: "Guys in their 20s think their bodies are indestructible," says Grover. "They neglect to do any sort of warm-up or cooldown. A bad habit starts right there."

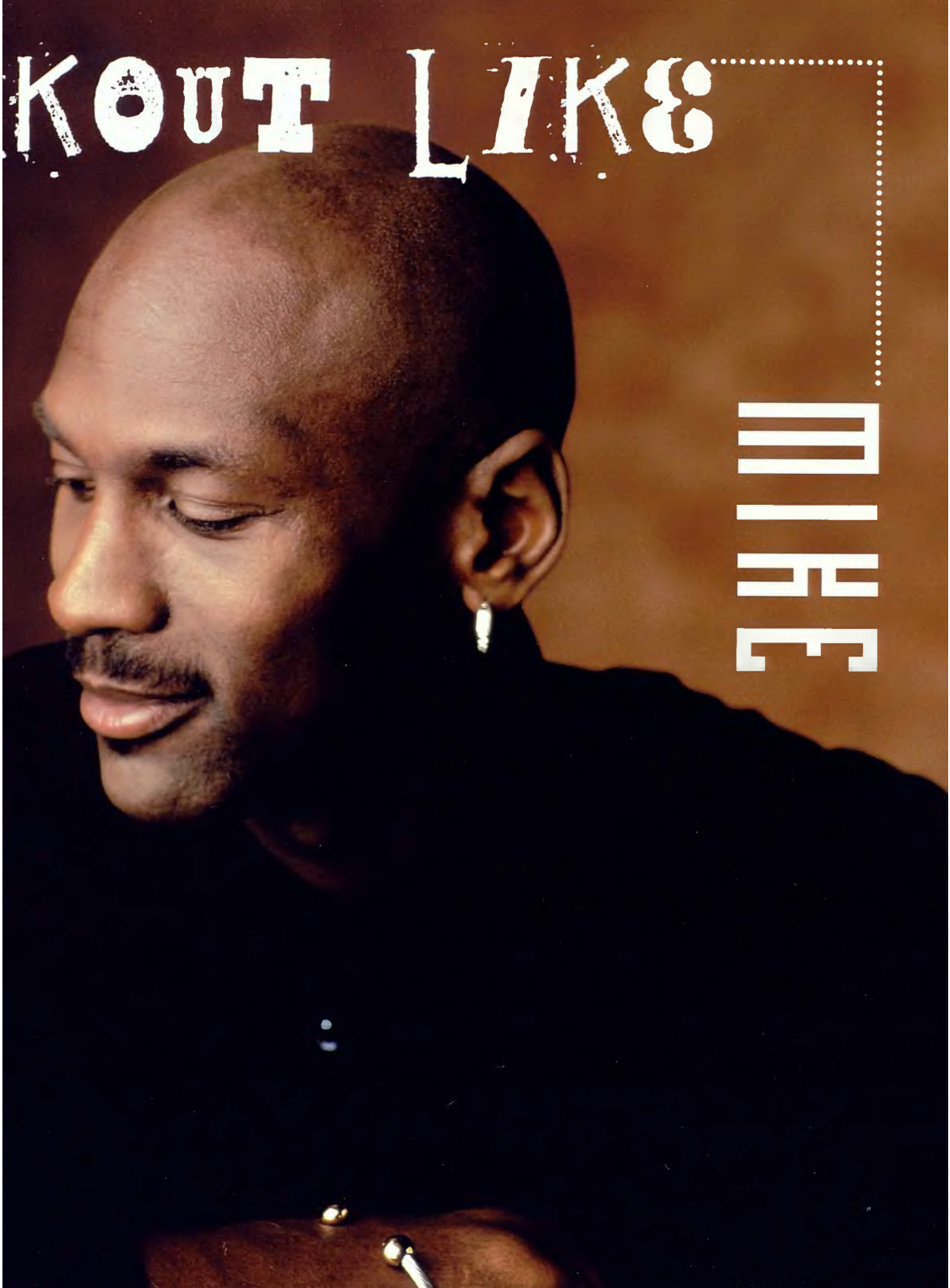
Research shows that most injuries occur in the first or last six minutes of a workout or game. The proper warm-up will protect against most mishaps, especially if you recognize and attend to potential trouble spots. Before you engage in physical activity, you should skip rope or do moderate aerobic activity to break a light sweat. Your muscles will then be warm enough for a stretching routine. Make the effort to stretch, even if it cuts into your time on the track or court.

PLAY THE GAME: "There's no exercise in the weight room that correlates directly to your sport," explains Grover. "If you want to improve your basketball shot or tennis serve, you have to get on the court. A bench press has nothing to do with athletic performance."

Weight training has its place, though—and that's in building a foundation of power and strength. It also guards against injuries. The squat, for instance, does more than provide a focal point for muscleheads at the gym. It stabilizes your lower body and torso.

SPEAKING OF GOALS: Every workout should have a goal, says Grover. The first A in Attack Athletics Inc., his Chicago-based training and sports enhancement company, stands for ambition. Grover insists on specific goals for all his clients, who include the NBA's Grant Hill, Kevin Garnett, Juwan Howard and Michael Finley, plus Tiger Woods *(concluded on page 192)*

PHOTO BY MARC HAUSER


KOUT LAKE
MIKE

PHIL HARTMAN'S GUIDE TO THE HOLIDAY OFFICE PARTY

how to get down with the boss—and other essential advice from the departed comic

by Phil Hartman with Robert Crane

the arrival

Be fashionably late. Arrive half an hour to one hour after the designated start time. You don't want to appear to be one of those needy nerdlets who are too grateful for an invitation. Because the host is usually your boss, make a perfunctory greeting. This will be followed up later, when you're more inebriated, with fawning, butt-nuzzling comments. The main thing now is to name your poison. The party doesn't really start until everybody is in an altered state. Since this is the office equivalent of Mardi Gras, it's your one chance to really go wild. Don't hold back. You can always blame inappropriate behavior on the booze. Everybody understands that. Everybody will be out of control.

the bartender

Make friends with the bartender. You can do this quickly with a well-placed $20 bill. You want him to push on your enemies the more sickening drinks like manhattans or mai tais or other fruity, sugary concoctions. You might say to the bartender, "Jim loves kamikazes. Whatever he asks for, give him a kamikaze." Tequila drinks, especially those made with cheap tequila, can drive your foes mad.

choice of drink

I recommend scotch because of its extraordinary properties. It makes you loud and shockingly uninhibited, true, but don't forget that it also makes you more handsome, triples *(continued on page 225)*

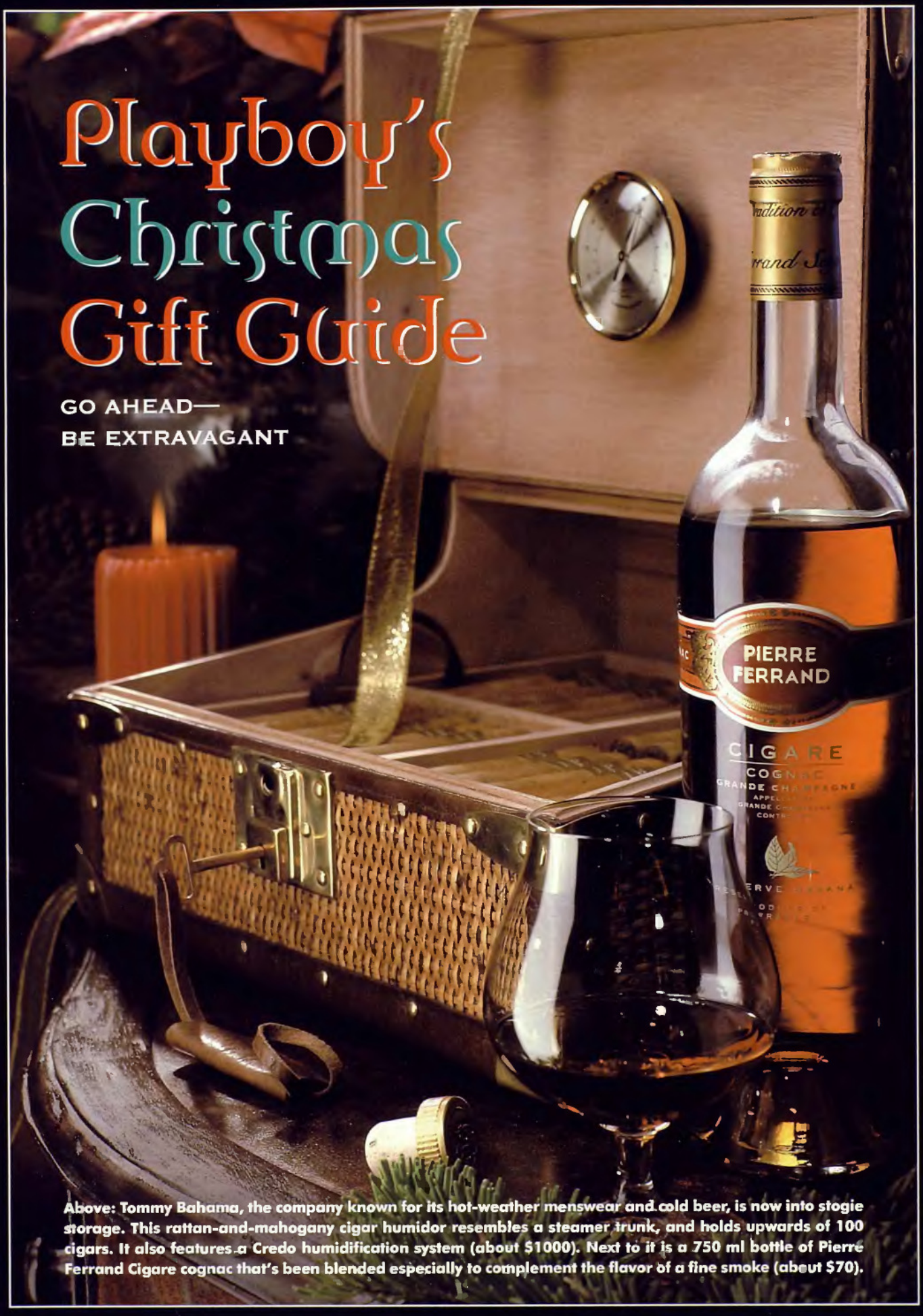
ILLUSTRATION BY JANET WOOLLEY

Espresso
Butts
Fashionable
Late

"Hey, Melchior—Cool!"

Playboy's Christmas Gift Guide

GO AHEAD— BE EXTRAVAGANT



Above: Tommy Bahama, the company known for its hot-weather menswear and cold beer, is now into stogie storage. This rattan-and-mahogany cigar humidor resembles a steamer trunk, and holds upwards of 100 cigars. It also features a Credo humidification system (about $1000). Next to it is a 750 ml bottle of Pierre Ferrand Cigare cognac that's been blended especially to complement the flavor of a fine smoke (about $70).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD IZUI

Above left: Willis & Geiger's hand-waxed leather chart case makes a terrific carry-on, thanks to multiple compartments and pockets, plus a handle that's set off-center so the case expands away from your body (about $470, including a removable shoulder strap). Above right: Requiring about as much desktop space as a tape dispenser, Sony's FDL-PT22 Color Watchman has a 2.2-inch color LCD screen and a strap antenna (about $110). Below left: Sharp's MD-MS702 minidisc player and recorder, with a rechargeable battery, shock-resistant memory and LCD remote control, is perfect for making compilation discs from CDs ($400). Below right: For serious travelers, there's no better way to stay in touch than with Kyocera's Iridium Multi-Mode telephone. This wireless device consists of a cell phone that operates worldwide in cities with cellular networks. In remote locales, the phone slides into a base unit that transmits and receives calls via satellite. The price: $3000.

Below: Talk about retro chic. TAG Heuer has reissued its Monaco watch, the world's first self-winding chronograph. It debuted in 1969 and became famous when Steve McQueen wore it in the 1971 film *Le Mans*. The Nineties Monaco, available in a limited edition of 5000, has additional dials for measuring seconds and minutes, calfskin band, updated movement and a casing that's water resistant to about 100 feet ($2300).

Above: Bang & Olufsen has put its slick spin on answering machines. The brushed-aluminum BeoTalk 1100, which can hang on the wall or rest on a desktop, uses Caller ID in conjunction with a digital-chip recorder to forward up to ten minutes' worth of messages to three mailboxes. Each mailbox can store a separate greeting and messages can be retrieved from any touch-tone phone. The price: $250. Below: The Swiss-made Capresso C2000 automatic espresso center is truly a bachelor's buddy at Christmas (or anytime) as it automatically grinds, tamps, brews, rinses and cleans itself—plus it fits beneath a kitchen cabinet (about $1400).

To commemorate the 45th anniversary of PLAYBOY magazine, we've teamed up with Titan to manufacture and produce this Collectors' Edition cruiser-style motorcycle in a limited edition of 100 hand-built bikes. Each is powered by a V-twin, two-cylinder engine that delivers more than 100 hp. Graphic treatments of a Marilyn Monroe silhouette, the Playboy Rabbit Head and our 45th anniversary logo appear on each bike ($39,000).

WHERE & HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 195.

article by Reg Potterton

Racing The Savage Atlantic

charlie barr smashed across the ocean in 12 days, four hours. there's a reason that record still stands

in 1905 a veteran salt named Charlie Barr drove a three-masted steel schooner from America to England in 12 days, four hours and one minute, thereby setting a record for a transatlantic fleet race. Charlie's feat still stood 92 years later when 15 yachts equipped with space-age navigation, communications and weather gizmos and manned by the hired guns of ocean racing's professional elite set out on the same course to set a new record.

I sailed on the *Adela*, a steel schooner flying the American flag and, at 170 feet overall length, the second biggest boat in the fleet. Our chief rival and the odds-on favorite to win was *Adix*, the British-registered 212-foot schooner. *Adix* led from the start. We watched her magnificent profile grow smaller as she pulled ahead, the pale sun gleaming on a full spread of canvas. Good sports that *Adela*'s sailors are, and at other times the best of mates with the *Adix* bunch, we could only hope that in the fullness of time the *Adix* crew would manage to screw up, break

PAINTING BY ELDON TRIMINGHAM III

something important and leave the honors to us.

•

Some people say old-time ocean racing sailors were tougher than their modern counterparts. Maybe. What is certain is that crews faced worse conditions in Charlie Barr's day. They handled heavier and less reliable gear, took bigger risks and suffered more because of inferior heavy-weather clothing, lousy food, cramped accommodations and substandard medical aid.

The strain showed. Six years after his great triumph, tough little Charlie Barr pegged out from a heart attack at 47, a victim of years of accumulated stress.

Poor Charlie. Too bad he didn't live to see the miracles of the modern age of ocean racing. In his time there were no fiberglass hulls or titanium blocks, no strain gauges, synthetic lines, carbon fiber masts, Kevlar sailcloth, global positioning satellites or liquid crystal display instruments. Poor Charlie navigated with a sextant and a chronometer. He didn't have shore bases recording each boat's progress from onboard electronic transponders. No cute stewardesses running up and down the decks with hot drinks and high-energy snacks.

Nor were there TV news helicopters chasing him across the starting line or New York City fireboats gushing farewell fountains against a backdrop of glamorous skyscrapers. Except for the two-year-old boat Charlie commanded, the fleet he raced in consisted mostly of wooden veterans—11 American, British and German gaffers, schooners and square-riggers, one of them a full-rigged ship.

The fleet left the Jersey shore in a cloud of sail, cheered on by spectator boats crowded with flag-waving passengers bellowing national anthems, and disappeared into a clammy mist. The winner would be rewarded with a gold cup donated by His Imperial Highness Kaiser Wilhelm II. This impressive trophy, later melted down to raise money for liberty bonds during World War I, turned out to be thinly plated cheap metal.

•

Charlie Barr was a professional captain aboard the American schooner *Atlantic* and the most successful racing sailor of his day. A Scotsman by birth and an American by choice, he was famous for his waxed mustache and for winning the America's Cup three times. He had no patience for slackers. It is part of his legend that during the 1905 race *Atlantic*'s owner crawled up on deck in a howling gale and said that since death looked imminent it might be a good idea if Captain Barr dropped a few sails. "Up yours, sir," Charlie replied—or words to that effect. "You hired me to win this race, and that by God is what I intend to do," adding that if Sir didn't like the weather he should stay below.

I wasn't thinking about our seafaring predecessors or their lack of technological enlightenment when a tug came to pull *Adela* away from the dock on May 17—the same date Charlie's fleet started their race. I was thinking about omens. During the previous week we'd been tied up at Pier 60 on the Hudson River, which is where the *Titanic* was bound on her one and only voyage.

On the way to the start as we dodged through spectator boats and commercial shipping, I mentioned this to the helmsman, Shag Morton, one of several Australians among the half-dozen flinty-eyed professionals taken on as *Adela*'s racing crew and a veteran of so many Atlantic crossings he's lost count.

I asked him if he thought the *Titanic* connection was an omen.

"Fuck the *Titanic*," he said.

"Do you think we'll beat Charlie Barr's record?"

"Fuck Charlie Barr."

"What about *Adix*?"

"Fuck *Adix*. And fuck you, too. I'm driving this bugger through traffic, not playing 20 questions."

He then turned the wheel over to the owner's 30-something son, Adam, who had the privilege of driving us across the starting line. The rest of the crew tried not to watch. Crossing the line is a crucial moment; a good start lifts morale, a bad one saps it, and for all his skills in the money market our starting helmsman was at best a novice on the high seas.

Shag stood next to the wheel, the tension almost palpable as we drew closer to the line and watched *Adix* take the lead.

"Go below that ship," Shag shouted. We were heading for the midsection of a tanker.

"Why?" Adam asked.

"Because you'll hit the bastard—Jesus Christ! Go round that one's bows."

"Why?"

"Same bloody reason." Before we crossed the line *Adela*'s captain, Steve Carson, got on the deck hailer to call the crew aft. All 28 of us—25 men, three women, eight nationalities—stood together for the first and probably the last time for the next 3000-some miles. We had been divided into two watches, so the members of each watch would rarely see the others before reaching England—except in a crisis, and that was unlikely to be as relaxed as this gathering was.

"Pay attention," Carson said, "especially you people who haven't done much sailing. At all times follow the sailor's rule: one hand for the ship, one hand for yourself. Don't be ashamed to wear safety harnesses. Clip 'em on when it blows. I don't want any of you bastards falling overboard and spoiling the race for the rest of us. It takes a long time to turn the boat round and pick people up out of the water. It's cold in the North Atlantic. Chances are you'll freeze to death before we get there—if we find you."

Thus encouraged, we turned off the engine, trimmed all sail and crossed the line in the spreading wake of the mighty *Adix*. Our poor start, Charlie Barr's record and his ghost be damned—we would by God show him and the world what the modern age of ocean racing was all about.

•

Think of a big sailing boat under way as a gigantic bow and arrow held at full stretch. The hull is the bow, the mast is the arrow and the rigging is the bowstring. What the mast wants to do when the boat is driven hard is punch a hole through the bottom of the hull. Failing that, its tendency is to fall down under the strain, which is what happens when the crafty balance of tension and flexibility that's built into the mast design suddenly gives way to any number of factors, including bad luck, weather and poor judgment.

On a boat racing across the Atlantic Ocean flat-out 24 hours a day, your world is a long steel tube that surges forward and upward, hangs over a hole in the sea, then crashes to the bottom of the hole with the force of a truck ramming the side of a mountain. You lie in the bunk, waiting for the next crunch to bring down the rig.

An old sailor sleeps through it, knowing that he can't do anything about it anyway and for some perverse reason actually enjoys the experience; for newcomers it's not so easy to rest in these conditions. This is when the unwary or the exhausted might find themselves stepping into a slack coil of line on deck just as the other end is about to be whipped at great speed through a series of metal blocks and around inch-thick steel rods in order to meet the demand of a fast-filling sail that's big enough to cover a couple of tennis courts. The result of this can be what some refer to as checking into the hurt locker.

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We lost sight of *Adix* on the third day out. She took a southerly and parallel course to ours while we ran north and

(continued on page 195)

"Now remember, this is for our Christmas cards—so look festive!"

METEOROLOGICAL MAYHEM!

tornadoes, tsunamis, scorching heat—is a plague of locusts next? are we cooked?

The most violent tornadoes create wind speeds up to 318 miles per hour. Three such tornadoes hit the U.S. in 1998.

If you think the weather has gone a bit wacko, you're in good company. Tom Karl, director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's climate data center in Asheville, North Carolina and respected keeper of the nation's weather statistics, believes it has, too. Karl and his colleagues have looked at their numbers to see whether this widespread public perception is based in fact. It is subtle work, separating real weather trends from the daily ups and downs of our unsteady atmosphere. But the scientists have found that recent weather has indeed been screwier in several ways—it's been hotter than ever, with bigger, rougher rainstorms, and there has been more hail and snow.

For instance, the ten hottest years in history have occurred since 1980, Karl notes, with 1998 being the hottest of the lot. And more of the rain and snow we get is from larger, wetter storms. North Atlantic storms of the past decade have been far more violent than those of the previous 100 years. In the U.S. Northeast, the frost season now ends 11 days earlier than it did in midcentury.

"We're seeing increases in extremes of precipitation," Karl says, "including heavy downpours, the kind that lead to flash floods. When we look at the data, especially in the U.S., we see them as a significant change."

It's hard to tie any one event, or even one season's weather—including the El Niño effect—to long-term trends. And Karl and other scientists won't do it. But reports from the past two years are intriguing.

Why so much drought? A warmer planet evoporates more water.

The 1996 and 1997 season was a real corker:

- In July, record rains flooded Yangtze River farmland.
- In November, the largest cyclone in ten years hit India, flattening 10,000 homes and leaving almost 2000 people missing or dead. In Honolulu, almost five times the normal rainfall brought mudslides and floods.
- In early January, the worst floods in the region's history hit Oregon and northern California, forcing more than 250,000 people from their homes. Early, heavy snow was largely responsible for killing half of Yellowstone's buffalo herd.
- The heaviest flooding and rain in 30 years hit Brazil and Bolivia in February, and a single mudslide killed 300 in Peru.
- In March, floods inundated parts of the U.S. Midwest. Ninety percent of Grand Forks, North Dakota was submerged in freezing water from the Red River, which had swollen to twice normal flood height.
- In April, the third-largest recorded snowstorm hit Boston.

The 1997 and 1998 season has been even more traumatic. Each month this year has seen a record for global temperatures—the highest in at least the past 600 years, according to one study. Glaciers around the world are melting, and rainfall worldwide has increased two percent since 1900, according to NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies. The jet stream, that high river of wind that affects weather closer to the ground, has been rushing overhead at up to twice its normal speed. And in the past decade, more of the U.S. has experienced either extreme drought or extreme moisture than at any other period in the past 100 years. All this activity has been intensified by this year's strong El Niño effect, that warming of the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean that skews normal weather patterns. In 1998, suspicious incidents have included:

- Rainfall in the Ohio Valley, New England, the upper Mississippi

More evaporation in one region adds moisture to clouds over others, bringing bigger monsoons.

article by Michael Parrish

Valley and Los Angeles was more than 200 percent above normal. Rivers in 17 states were near or above flood stage by July.

- While the most violent, F5 tornadoes are rare in any year, three touched down in the U.S. in the first half of 1998. The U.S. tornado death count was the highest in 24 years.
- Snow fell in Guadalajara, Mexico for the first time since 1881.
- Texas, Florida, Louisiana and parts of Georgia got only 25 percent of normal rainfall amid a tremendous heat wave—north Texas had a full month of temperatures over 100 degrees.
- Every county in Florida was hit by wildfires in June and July, driving more than 120,000 people from their homes.
- Elsewhere in the world, the worst cyclone in 25 years hit India, killing more than 400 people. Flooding of the Yangtze River killed 3000 and dislocated millions. Monsoons in Bangladesh marooned more than 8 million. Unusually strong rains in Africa killed 2000 and forced 250 million from their homes. Peru gained a new 2300-square-mile lake from its share of the deluge. A tsunami in Papua New Guinea killed thousands.

•

Such bedlam is expensive. Damage from the Florida fires was well over $250 million. Hurricane Andrew, which flattened a good deal of south Florida in 1992, wreaked $30 billion in damages, making it the nation's priciest natural disaster. In the years since, Florida homeowners have seen their insurance rates jump an average of 72 percent. The blizzard of 1996 cost $3 billion in the Northeast. And the year before, drought in the U.S. Midwest helped jack up grain prices to a two-decade high—ultimately adding $200 to an average family's annual supermarket bill.

No wonder we wake up to the Weather Channel and trot to Wal-Mart to buy weather porn videos. Still, we don't know much about how weather works. Hundreds of years after Ben Franklin and son survived Ben's harebrained feat of flying a kite into lightning, we don't really understand how thunderstorms make electricity. Meanwhile, people continue to be struck by lightning on golf courses, zapped through the phone while talking during a storm and fried in their bathtubs by a bolt through the plumbing.

So, What's Behind All This WEIRD WEATHER?

Most climate scientists worldwide now agree that the planet is warming and that humans have had a hand in it. Karl and many others think cloudbursts and scorching summers are the first warped greenhouse chickens come home to roost. Some man-made air pollutants—mainly carbon dioxide and methane—let sunlight into the atmosphere but trap heat on its way out. The process works a lot like an ordinary nursery greenhouse. The sun's rays enter through the glass and warm the inside. Part of this warmth returns to the atmosphere as heat—infrared—radiation but is stopped by greenhouse gases. Gradually the earth's surface warms.

Most other environmental problems we've apparently caused in the upper air have been brought on by burning fossil fuels—coal, oil and natural gas. We've made real (largely unnoticed) progress on a couple of high-altitude fronts. Two of the big three upper-atmosphere pollution problems are well on their way to correction. (A fourth, the oxidizing capacity of the planet, is so little understood that we don't yet know if it's a major threat.)

Big blizzards—another product of increased moisture—kill more livestock, crops and people.

The once-ominous ozone hole, for instance, is caused mostly by chlorofluorocarbons. A study in 1974 showed how high-altitude ozone, which screens out some ultraviolet radiation, could be destroyed by the chlorine released from CFCs. Some forms of ultraviolet radiation have been reported to cause skin cancer and cataracts. In 1985, the ozone over Antarctica had not only thinned (as it had every winter), it had disappeared altogether. Two years later, British

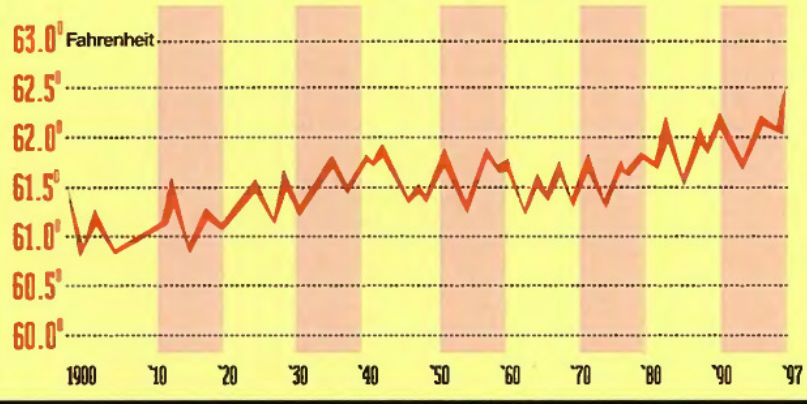
In the Nineties, 4 percent more U.S. territory has been swamped by big, wet storms than in any other decade this century.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and President Ronald Reagan endorsed an international agreement in Montreal to phase out the manufacture of CFCs. George Bush, with the cooperation of DuPont, the predominant domestic maker, accelerated the phaseout and other countries followed suit. You haven't been able to buy a CFC-aerosol can in the U.S. for more than a decade. By 2040, the ozone shield should be back to normal. As veteran environmental journalist Gregg Easterbrook observed in *A Moment on the Earth*, "If most of the world's important issues could be resolved as quickly as ozone depletion can, earth would be a paradise."

Controlling acid rain has been tougher. In the Northeast it is largely caused by coal burned in Midwest power plants that release sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere, where it turns into sulfuric acid. Lesser villains are nitrogen oxides (mainly from vehicles) that also turn into nitric acid in the air. *(text continued on page 122)*

IS IT HOT OR IS IT JUST US?

Last year was the warmest of the century, in terms of average global surface temperature.



Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

What Weathermen Don't Know

Think predicting the weather isn't important? At least one forecast changed the course of World War II. In the weeks before D day, Allied commander Dwight Eisenhower dragooned every meteorologist in Britain and ordered them to do two-day and three-day forecasts using the Allies' one great advantage—the network of weather stations in the Atlantic. The Nazis had already abandoned their Greenland weather station, their last observation post west of Europe. When a blustery, rain-heavy storm arrived on June 4, the German generals assumed they were safe from an amphibious assault. But Ike's meteorologists spotted a break—a low-pressure calm heading east from Scotland. "OK, we'll go," Ike announced with soldierly hope. Luckily for the British weathermen, the skies cleared on schedule on June 6.

Though many of us now get our forecasts from TV anchors who chatter like parakeets, prediction itself has improved. Weather balloons, satellites and computers have helped clear the crystal ball.

"It turns out the easier part of the job has been predicting tomorrow and the next day, for temperature and wind," says A.E. "Sandy" MacDonald, director of the Forecast Systems Laboratory of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Commerce Department agency that feeds its research to the National Weather Service. "The harder part of the job has been to get really good forecasts of precipitation."

The NWS' wind and temperature forecasts are correct 80 percent to 90 percent of the time, says MacDonald. But predictions of heavy rain, snow and hail are accurate only 25 percent of the time, he admits, though he prefers the more attractive comparison to a batting average of .250.

"It's hard to hit a baseball," he points out. "It's also hard to predict an inch of rain tomorrow."

The reason: Temperature and wind patterns stretch over vast areas—across hundreds and even thousands of miles. But most weather systems that drop precipitation are so small that they often slip through the gridwork of balloons sent up twice daily every 400 to 500 miles across the country.

So what does that "50 percent chance of rain tomorrow" really mean? It means your local weatherperson has his or her hands on predictions from National Weather Service forecasters who have compared the next few days' weather pattern in your area to their database of similar past weather patterns at that time of year. And the feds' records have shown that five times out of ten, it rained.

1998's Weirdest Weather Moments

Portland, Oregon records its hottest April day ever—90 degrees.

Santa Barbara, California gets more rain in one month—21.74 inches—than in any month before.

Billings, Montana welcomes the New Year with a 60-degree temperature—the warmest January 1 in its history.

Tucson, Arizona sees its February rainfall total increase four times over normal.

Black Hills, South Dakota gets 102.4 inches of snow from one February snowstorm, twice the previous record.

Dallas, Texas endures 29 straight days of temperatures over 100 degrees in July.

Williston, North Dakota hits 26 degrees on June 4, its coldest temperature on record for June.

New York's Central Park gets 22.5 inches of snow on March 22. Nine days later, the mercury hits 86 degrees.

Lake Erie doesn't freeze during February, for the third time this century.

Florida suffers a terrible drought. In May and June, 80 percent of the state is at the same drought level as a desert. Devastating fires follow.

New England gets an early summer. Boston reaches 89 degrees in March. Portland, Maine hits 88.

Washington, D.C. doesn't dip below 60 degrees for eight straight days, despite the fact that it's January.

Hawaii, which had weathered five times the normal rainfall in 1996 and 1997, experiences a drought so severe it has to import drinking water.

SOURCE: SIERRA CLUB

How bad can it get?

The big worry for many scientists isn't whether the earth is warming or cooling, it's how fast change can happen. We used to think we eased into an ice age or hot spell over decades or hundreds of years. Many scientists now believe we could see a drastic change in the course of a few years. Two scenarios: The warming planet releases moisture in the form of snow that builds up glacial ice, which buries continents and cools the planet. Rising polar temperature melts the West Antarctic ice sheet, raising ocean levels by 20 feet and erasing Florida and New York City. Either profound climate change could kill or enhance farming in various regions, herd entire species to new territories, alter the spread of diseases and build up or devastate economies.

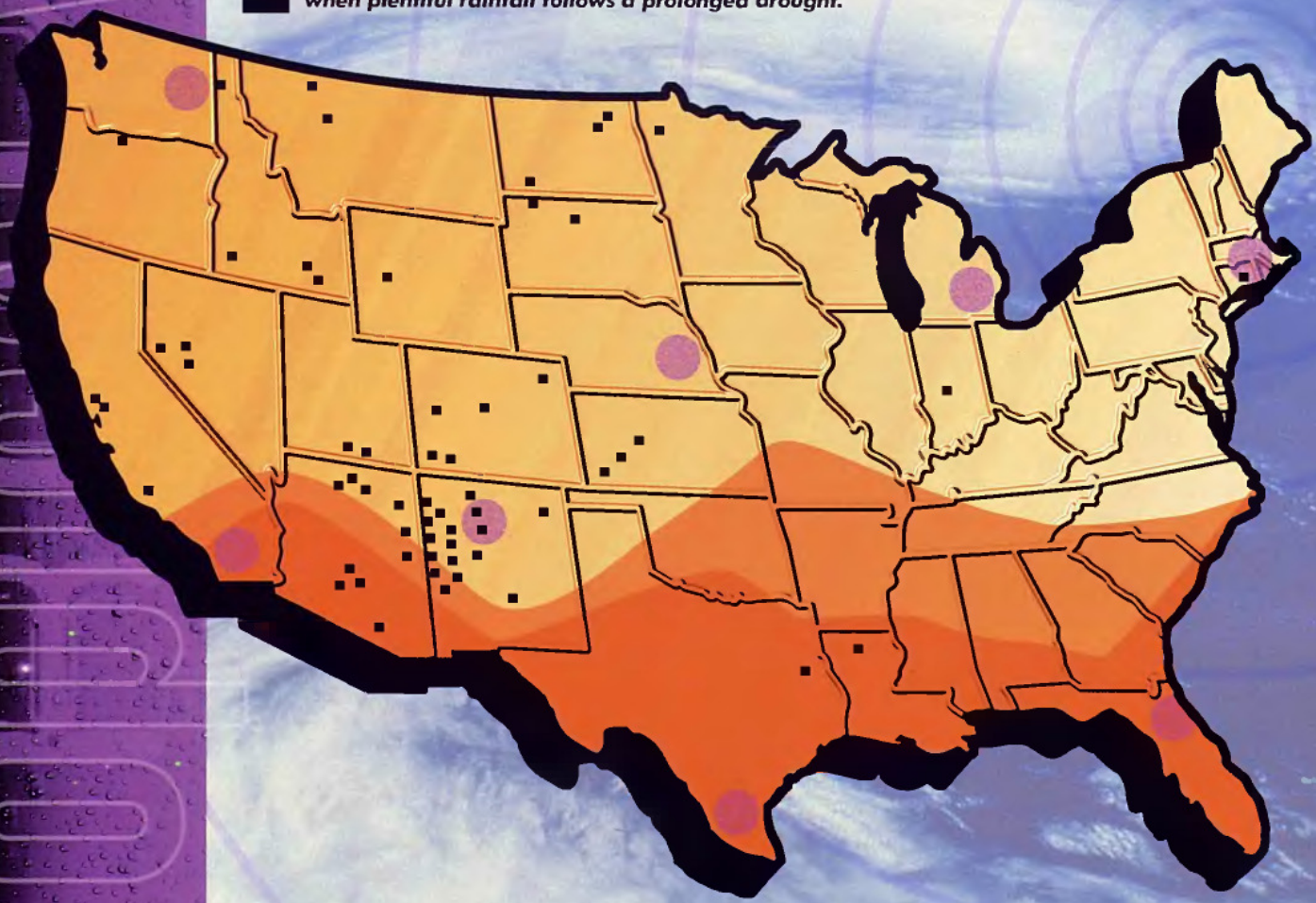
Global warming is good for disease

Possible locations of rise in dengue fever, a mosquito-borne disease common in the tropics.

Current extent of malaria-carrying mosquitoes, which are now restricted to hot, humid areas.

Projected extent of malaria-carrying mosquitoes if the temperature were to increase six to ten degrees.

Incidents of hantavirus, an often fatal disease transmitted by rodent populations, which boom when plentiful rainfall follows a prolonged drought.



SOURCES: EPA AND SIERRA CLUB

By the Sixties, these pollutants had increased the natural acidity of rain to the point that trees at high altitudes in U.S. forests—including the Blue Ridge Mountains—and in similar woods across Europe were dying in clumps. Some lakes became too acidic for fish to live in. But the 1970 Clean Air Act forced new U.S. power plants to control sulfur emissions. Two decades later, tougher controls were adopted. So far, these efforts have cut acid rain by more than half—at about a fifth of the cost that power producers once predicted. We're not home free, but we're getting there.

Reversing global warming is still more problematic. Mending the ozone layer was largely a matter of switching from chlorofluorocarbons to other, more benevolent products. But the prospect of dramatically altering world energy use to correct something that at first glance seems like a tiny change in climate has some critics predicting crippled national economies and the loss of a billion jobs.

HERDING THE CATS

One big question now is whether we have time enough to figure out what we've already done, much less fix it. And you get a lot of different answers to that. As A.E. "Sandy" MacDonald, director of the Forecast Systems Laboratory of NOAA, puts it, "One of the nice things about scientists is, as somebody once said, 'It's like herding cats. They don't all do the same thing.'"

Boulder, Colorado boasts one of the largest concentrations of climate scientists in the world. And they are like cats, independent and contrary. The National Center for Atmospheric Research is a major power in climate debate. NCAR scientists study both climate and weather. The shorthand distinction is that climate is what we expect; weather is what we get. Climate is the long-term condition; weather is what's blowing at you at this moment. At NCAR, and with most mainstream climatologists around the world, global warming is no longer in question.

"Even the skeptics say there will be warming," explains Kevin Trenberth, a New Zealander who heads the climate analysis section that studies past, present and future changes. He considers himself a moderate in the greenhouse battles, which gives his views a distressing edge. "What we've already done," he says carefully, "is going to have major ramifications for the next 50 or 100 years."

Trenberth wrote part of a landmark report for the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a group that has been thrashing out common ground on warming. Based on the work of 2500 researchers, the IPCC's report suggested there is a "discernible human influence on climate." For a group that, as *Newsweek* put it, "can hardly agree on what to order for lunch," it amounted to the heavy artillery issuing a greenhouse warning.

The group also agreed that this rate of warming is greater than the planet has seen in the past 10,000 years and could bring complex changes in the weather. Agricultural output could shrivel or prosper, depending on location. Changes in rainfall patterns and glacial melting could affect where we get our drinking water. Some forest species will likely die out; others will expand. The oceans, which have already risen more than six inches in the past hundred years, could be higher by a couple of feet a century from now—depriving the Dutch of as much as six percent of their land, Bangladeshis of almost 18 percent.

This year's El Niño by itself raised the sea level along the California coast six to eight inches. Trenberth points out that a rise in sea level does damage not only with gradual flooding but with surges caused by hurricanes and other strong ocean storms. "Even a relatively modest increase in sea level," he says, "can suddenly scour out a whole harbor or beachfront."

Last December, in Kyoto, Japan, an international summit reluctantly agreed that the industrialized nations as a group must lower greenhouse gases to five percent below their 1990 levels by the year 2012. But the pact—if ratified by the industrial nations that signed it—will slow, not reverse, the buildup of greenhouse gases.

Meanwhile, to advocates of the greenhouse theory, new research has added more evidence of global warming. NOAA calculates that the occurrence of heavy precipitation has been up by 20 percent during this century. In July 1996, scientists at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography confirmed that spring now appears a full week earlier in the northern hemisphere than it did just two decades ago. Boston University researchers estimate that since 1980, vegetation above the 45th parallel has increased by ten percent—stimulated by warmer temperatures. Another NOAA study last year found that warming had increased atmospheric moisture—the raw ingredient of big rainstorms—by ten percent in North America.

Grisly stuff, these observations. And based on hard data. Much weather observation is simple and easily proved. For instance, real people with real glass flasks measure the increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in our atmosphere.

But theorizing about how the earth will behave under greenhouse stress—or whether that stress will be easily overwhelmed by larger climatic changes—is a different story. Global warming differs from other environmental issues because there could be winners as well as losers. Some countries stand to gain, mostly through improved agricultural production. Even within the same region, farmers may be happy to get more rain while merchants and flood-control managers pray for it to stop. And countries that make their money selling coal and petroleum face a difficult policy consideration. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, for instance, have issued few global warming warnings, for the likely cure would be to use less of their national product.

CAN THE EARTH HEAL ITSELF?

In the Seventies, a couple of biologists sketched out a way of looking at the earth that has since been embraced by crystal gazers and other less-sophisticated students of the planet. The Gaia theory (or Gaia metaphor) holds that the world operates as if it were a living organism. To the embarrassment of many scientists, some took this to mean that Mother Earth is, in fact, an organism, which is not what the scientists had in mind. The real point is that the interlocking natural systems of the planet include feedback systems that tend to adjust to change in a giant mode of self-regulation.

Lee Klinger, a staff scientist at NCAR, gives an example. A rock and a rabbit start out in early summer side by side. As summer progresses and the atmosphere warms, the rock heats up steadily—a non-Gaian reaction. The temperature of the rabbit doesn't increase. The rabbit sheds some fur and spends more time in the shade to keep a constant internal temperature—that's self-regulation.

Klinger and others think such feedback systems on a world scale could account for some anomalies in global warming. With people pumping so much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, for instance, there should be a lot more carbon hanging around than there is. Widely suspected areas for the "missing" carbon include the forests and peat bogs of the northern hemisphere. One plausible explanation: Plant growth is stimulated by carbon dioxide in the air, and this causes the plants to absorb even more CO_2. Has a natural feedback mechanism kicked in to absorb the higher amounts of carbon dioxide, slowing the expected greenhouse effect?

Klinger and others agree that such

(continued on page 210)

"Whoa! Steady, boy—I can see an item you've forgotten to wrap!"

once, twice, three times a lady: it's the identical dahm triplets

"We wanted a big school, the University of Minnesoto, so nobody would know us as the triplets," says Nicole (middle, with Joclyn, left, and Erico). "But we ended up taking the some courses because it wos such fun to be together."

THIS IS WHAT happens when you walk into House of Blues in Chicago with triplets Nicole, Erica and Jaclyn Dahm: Word spreads like a Malibu brushfire that someone important has arrived. "Who is it?" people whisper, frantically scanning the room for the source of the excitement. "There!" someone shouts, pointing to the doorway, where three tall, blonde, svelte, identical women stand, dressed in jeans and T-shirts, oblivious to the commotion they're causing. Men gawk. Are they models? Playmates? Women give our Miss Decembers astonished once-overs. Servers fight to balance wobbly trays of food, their arms suddenly gone limp. The maître d', who just told the party in front of you that there is a 35-minute wait for a table, whisks your group into an elevator and up to the VIP lounge. Long Island iced teas are rushed to the table. Busboys sneak from the kitchen for a glimpse. The waitress says, "Are you triplets? Wow! You're so pretty!" Welcome to Dahm mania, a phenomenon that started on December 12, 1977 when Nicole, Erica and Jaclyn were born, in that order, to parents Robert and Donita. The triplets have been in the spotlight ever since, including a Hardee's commercial when they were eight years old, victory in a *Teen* magazine model search at the age of 16 and appearances on talk shows, including *The Jenny Jones*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
RICHARD FEGLEY

THREE'S COMPANY

Show and *Ricki Lake*.

Q: Do the three of you cause a frenzy everywhere you go?

Nicole: If we do, we don't notice it.

Jaclyn: We try to fade into the background. We're actually quiet and kind of shy.

Q: If only one of you had become a Playmate, would the other two have been jealous?

Jaclyn: We would never have done this as individuals.

Nicole: We felt less insecure posing as a group. During the photo shoot I was thinking, They're looking at her, not at me.

Q: What is the coolest thing about being a triplet?

Jaclyn: We each can tell what the other two are thinking without their saying anything.

Erica: It's an instant party. We start the grill, grab some beer, call our boyfriends and have six people ready to rage.

Q: Is there a downside to being a triplet?

Jaclyn: Privacy is not easy to find. Growing up, we shared everything, even a bedroom. And people always ask, "Which one are you?"

Erica: When we were born, our fingerprints were so similar that the doctor had to put permanent ink dots on our butts to tell us apart. Nicole was born first, so she has one. I have two. They were going to put three of them on Jaclyn, but she was so tiny, the dots would have blended and looked like two. So she has none.

Q: In a dark room, how do your boyfriends tell you apart?

Jaclyn: [*Laughs*] They don't.

"It's been a party since the day we were born," says Nicole. "We've never been apart for longer than a week," Erica adds. "We would have withdrawal."

"Our lives are like a TV show," says Erica (above, middle), getting wet and wild with Nicole (right) and Jaclyn (left). "We're always cracking each other up." In order to date a Dahm sister, you must seek approval from the other two. "If one of the sisters doesn't like another sister's boyfriend, the relationship ends," Nicole says. "We can see that the guy isn't right for her," Erica adds. "We protect one another."

Erica: That's for sure. Nicole's boyfriend will come up behind me and put his arms around me, and I'm like, "Wrong one, buddy."

Q: Tell us more about your wild side.

Nicole: We respect our parents, so let's just say that we have done some things behind their backs.

Q: Like what?

Jaclyn: You name it.

Erica: People think we're sweet and innocent, but we're not. Speed turns us on. We'd get on a Harley with a guy in a second.

Nicole: Plus we have tattoos on the insides of our wrists.

Q: What do your tattoos symbolize?

Jaclyn: The three of us.

Nicole: We came from one egg that was split into three. We wanted to symbolize how close we are.

Wherever the triplets go, they are asked about their appearance. "The dumbest question is, 'Are you three twins?'" Erica says. Still not sure who's who? "Erica's eyes are different," Nicole explains. "Jaclyn's got the thinnest face." "Nicole's the leader," Jaclyn says. "She stands up tallest."

MISSES DECEMBER
PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATES OF THE MONTH

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: ERICA, Nicole, Jaclyn DahM

BUST: 34C WAIST: 25 HIPS: 34

HEIGHT: 5'8" WEIGHT: 115

BIRTH DATE: 12·12·77 BIRTHPLACE: Minneapolis, Minnesota

AMBITIONS: To continue modeling and enjoy life wherever it may take us.

TURN-ONS: Big bright eyes, sexy cologne, tight butts, sense of humor and guys who live on the edge.

TURNOFFS: Immaturity, laziness, bad hygiene.

QUALITIES JACLYN VALUES MOST IN OTHERS: Respect, honesty and a friendly smile.

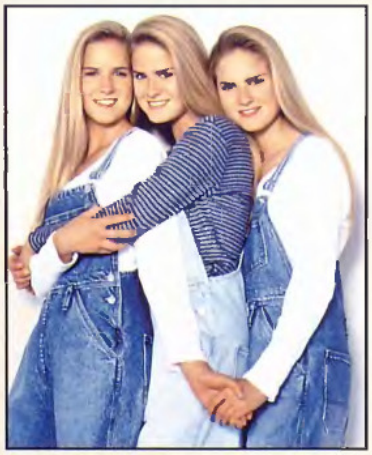
HOW TO GET ERICA'S ATTENTION: All you gotta do... is make me laugh.

NICOLE'S SEX ADVICE: "Hey guys, don't leave her hangin'!"

JACLYN'S FAVORITE WAY TO WAKE UP: Whispers of sweet nothings.

WHAT DRIVES ERICA WILD: The "rush" of holding on to my man on the back of a motorcycle.

WHY NICOLE LOVES BEING A TRIPLET: Having two best friends.



Sisterly love @ a photo shoot

Candid moment age 15

TEEN Magazine - "Great Model Search" '94 winners

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

The President and Mrs. Clinton were in bed late one night when Hillary tugged on his elbow and asked, "Bill, are you awake?"

"What do you want?"

"I need a glass of water."

"Are you kidding? I'm the president of the United States. I'm not getting you a glass of water. I don't get anyone a glass of water, especially not in the middle of the night!"

"I'll get the water myself," Hillary said. "I just want you to save my place."

PLAYBOY CLASSIC: A married couple was enjoying a dinner out when a statuesque brunette walked over to their table, exchanged warm greetings with the husband and walked off. "Who was that?" the wife asked.

"If you must know," the husband replied, "that was my mistress."

"Your mistress?" she fumed. "That's it! I want a divorce!"

"Are you sure you want to give up our big house in the suburbs, your Mercedes, your furs, your jewelry and our vacation home in Mexico?" her husband asked.

For a long time they dined in silence. Finally, the woman nudged her husband. "Isn't that Howard over there?" she said. "Who's he with?"

"That's his mistress," he replied.

"Oh," she said, sipping her coffee. "Ours is much cuter."

How do you know you've met an extroverted accountant? While he's talking to you he's looking at your shoes instead of his own.

While patrolling a late-night make-out spot a cop drove by a car and saw a couple inside with the dome light on. A young man was in the driver's seat, reading a magazine. A young woman in the backseat was knitting. The officer stopped to investigate, walked up to the driver's window and tapped on it. The young man cranked it down. "Yes, officer?"

"What are you doing?" the policeman asked.

"I'm reading a magazine."

Pointing toward the young lady in the backseat, the officer then asked, "And what is she doing?"

"She's knitting a sweater."

"How old are you, young fellow?"

"I'm 19."

"And how old is she?"

The fellow looked at his watch. "Well, in about 12 minutes," he said, "she'll be 18."

THIS MONTH'S MOST FREQUENT SUBMISSION: Worried that it might be raining, a guy in an apartment complex stuck his head out the window to check. As he did so a glass eye fell into his hand. He looked up in time to see a beautiful young woman looking down. "Is this yours?" he asked.

"Yes," she said, "would you bring it up?" The man agreed.

Upon his arrival she was profuse in her thanks and offered him a drink. Shortly afterward she said, "I'm about to have dinner. There's plenty. Would you like to join me?" He readily accepted her offer and they enjoyed a lovely meal. As they carried their dishes to the kitchen the woman said, "I've had a marvelous evening. Would you like to spend the night?"

The man hesitated, then asked, "Do you act like this with every man you meet?"

"No," she replied, "only with those who catch my eye."

Why did the auditor cross the road? Because he looked in the file and that's exactly what he did last year.

Late one night, just blocks from the Capitol, a mugger jumped into the path of a well-dressed fellow and stuck a gun in his ribs. "Give me your money," the thief demanded.

"Are you kidding?" the man said. "I'm a U.S. congressman."

"In that case," the mugger growled, cocking his weapon, "give me my money."

A SHORT GUIDE TO MALESPEAK:

"I'm a romantic." = "I'm poor."

"I want a commitment." = "I'm sick of jerking off."

"Haven't I seen you before?" = "Nice tits."

"I have something important to tell you." = "Get tested."

"I've been thinking a lot." = "You're not as attractive as you were when I was drunk."

"I've learned a lot from you." = "Next!"

Send your jokes on postcards to Party Jokes Editor, PLAYBOY, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or by e-mail to jokes@playboy.com. $100 will be paid to the contributor whose submission is selected. Sorry, jokes cannot be returned.

"Shoplifter, in aisle four."

It Is An Ancient Mariner

radio ronnie was a prisoner of sex, crazy to fornicate with scrawny-assed marcia instead of that sweet woman at home. one more drink and i'll tell you all about it

fiction By ETHAN COEN

Now it might interest you to know, stranger, that that barstool you are sitting on is the very one Radio Ronnie Harper was occupying when his wife bust through those doors and marched up to him and stabbed him in the neck, and both their little daughters watching. She had a Buck knife, Ronnie's own hunting knife, in fact, and stuck it in wrongways. I don't mean handle first, how the hell you gonna do that, I mean cutting edge toward her, kind of sidearm, like she was boxing his ear. Except it was his neck. And that knife slides in like a good Buck knife will and she pulls toward her, which you're never supposed to do. You could get hurt. She was OK in this instance, though Ronnie of course died of it.

No, I don't mind your sitting there. I'm just saying.

I myself was sitting right here, right next to him. This is my stool. No, thank you for asking, I was not injured. It was a domestic dispute, not a rampage. Ronnie's stool and mine, right next to each other. Here I sat and do sit now. Most folks still reference that as Ronnie Harper's stool. Only a year ago he died. No, nobody minds you sitting there. *We* don't do it as a rule, but not out of principle. Just prefer not to. So anybody sits there we know is a stranger. Well, not just because they sit there, but because we can see they're a stranger. If they weren't a stranger, they wouldn't sit there. Plus, we would know *(continued on page 166)*

ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLES BURNS

MICHAEL DOUGLAS

"I'm not a shopper," says Michael Douglas. "I'm blessed to have a career that allows me to shop as part of my job. I try to take advantage of fittings." Douglas is a master of the ceremonial tux. Preparation for the Oscars starts months in advance with free offers from designers. These days, though, Douglas is on a campaign to withstand the barrage. "We actors sell out too easily. It's time to buy our own tuxes and dresses—or at least get better benefits from the exposure."

PLAYBOY'S TEN BEST DRESSED MEN FOR 1998

Fashion By HOLLIS WAYNE

rich and famous guys pick their own clothes, too. these trendsetters rank at the top

What more appropriate time to compile our first Best Dressed List than when men's fashion is on the rise? Call it the return of the gentleman. All of the men who made our list are regular guys—albeit incredibly successful ones—who have no problem with looking good. You won't find them pimping for free suits, but they are all surprisingly conversant in the language of fashion. Michael Douglas, for one, is a relentless promoter of Ellen Mirojnick, the costume designer for *Wall Street*, *Basic Instinct* and *A Perfect Murder*. "I'm a big supporter of costume designers," says Douglas. "They set the fashion trends long before American design became so popular." Mayor Willie Brown of San Francisco could school the most cosmopolitan dresser. His advice: Be careful when you break up an ensemble. His Honor explains: "There's a reason they designed the pocket square or the tie the way they did. It wasn't meant to be used with six different outfits. That would be counterproductive for them economically, so you better believe they designed it so you can't." Without exception, these ten men enjoy being hip to fashion. Each has his own way of talking about it and thinking about it. But whether they go to the clothes or the clothes come to them, they know what they like. They also don't care if they don't know everything. "I have no idea who makes what in ladies' clothes," admits Denis Leary. "But I can point and say, 'Look at that fucking dress!'"

MATTHEW BRODERICK

Whether he's making the scene in Hollywood or on Broadway, Matthew Broderick favors modern silhouettes. "I like clothes," he says. "I just don't like to admit it. I'm laughing and honored to be on this list." His taste for contemporary design is shared by his wife, Sarah Jessica Parker, currently starring in HBO's *Sex and the City*. "I usually shop with her. It's hard to go alone and she loves fashion."

LAWRENCE ELLISON

As head af saftware giant Oracle, Lawrence Ellisan is an impeccably graamed antithesis of Bill Gates. "I used to buy custam, but naw I'm a big fan af Brioni," he says. "I like classic, almast military cuts." Thaugh he's said to be warth $6 billian, he shaps withaut a stylist. He'll hit Richard James an Savile Raw, Briani and Zegna in Milan and Wilkes Bashford in San Francisca ("Where the mayar and I fight aver clathes"). A canservative dresser—blue suit, red tie, white shirt fram Charvet in Paris—Ellison's idea af fashion hell is a pair af plaid pants.

DENIS LEARY

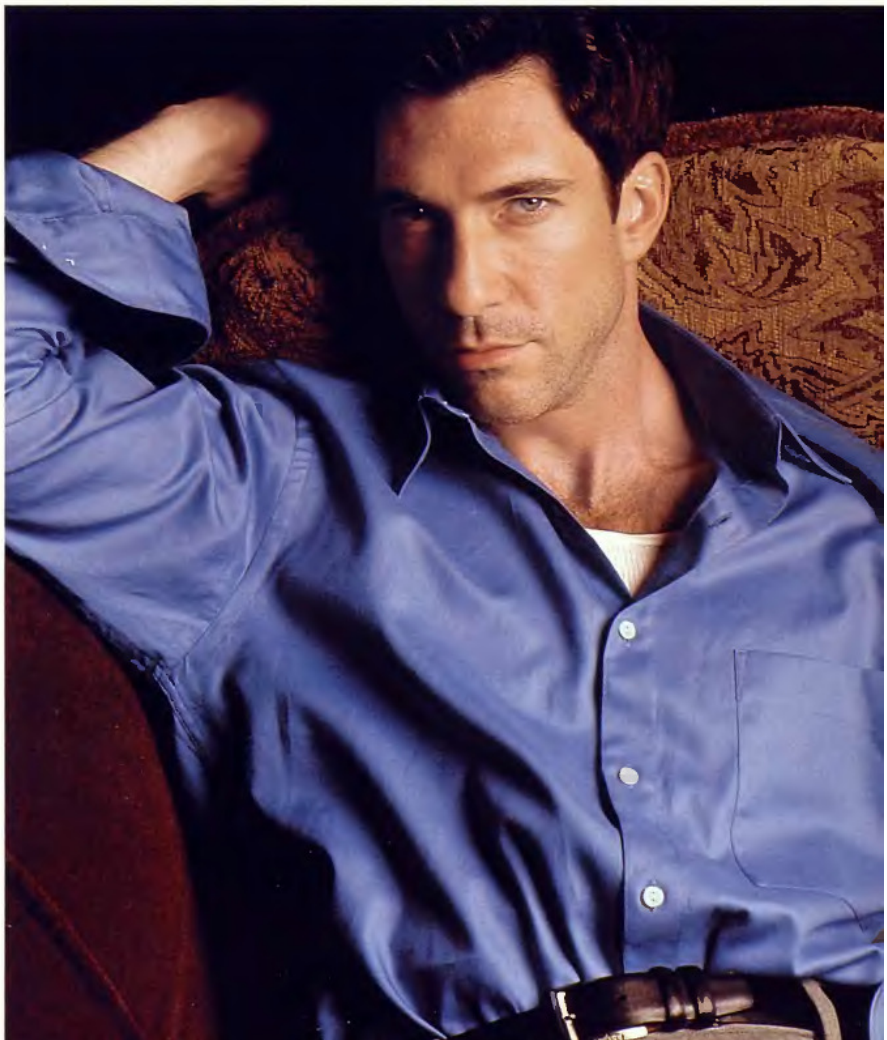
"For me, clothes shopping doesn't hoppen unless I'm really fucking bored," says Denis Leary (right). He relies on his wife (she likes Calvin Klein) and his stylist and ex-girlfriend Rochelle Joseph. ("She's over the revenge foctor. She mokes me look good.") His jacket here is by Canoli. Off the set he wears beat-up leother jockets, hockey jerseys and shodes. "Steve McQueen had a couple of different shodes in *Bullit*. I saw them as a kid and just went, 'Wow!'" he says.

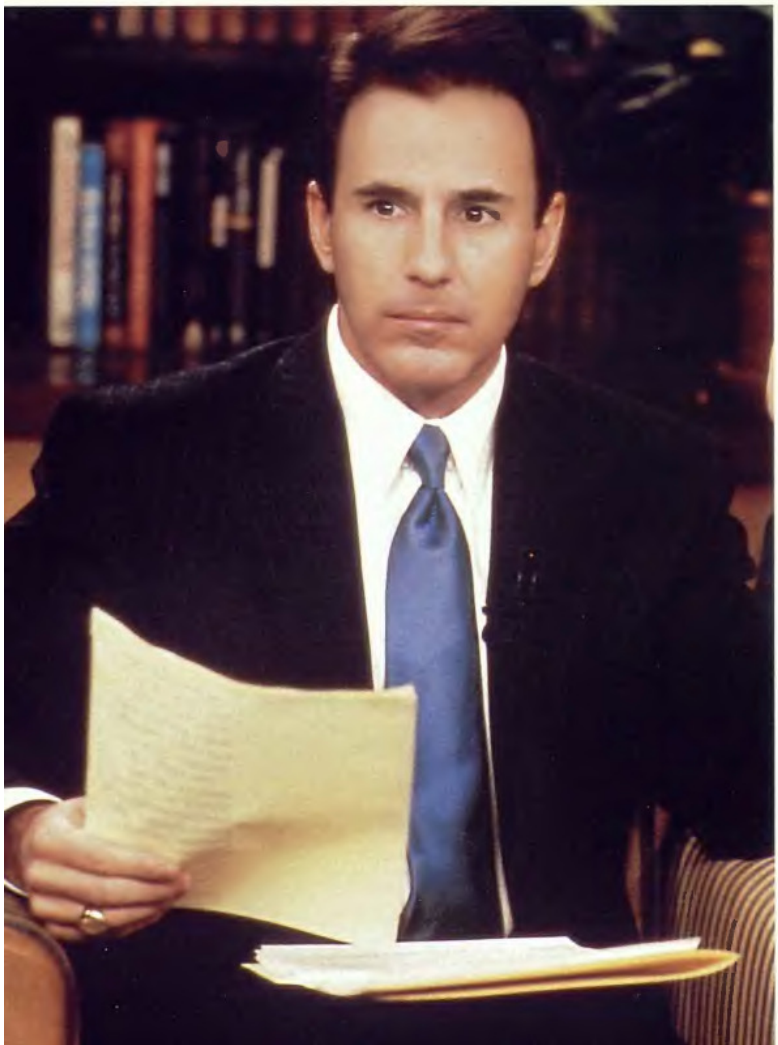
DYLAN McDERMOTT

His prime-time role on the Emmy-winning droma *The Practice* as sharply dressed lawyer Bobby Donnell sets the bar high for Dylan McDermott (below right) ond his new studly image. Fortunotely he hos on ally at home. "Absolutely," he admits. "My wife always helps me dress." He likes designerwear by DKNY, Prodo, Gucci and Armani and obhors poisley ties. This year McDermott was tapped as one of *People*'s 50 Most Beautiful People.

PATRICK EWING

There wos an upside to this All-Star center's injury last year—Patrick Ewing (below) showed he could dress as well os his old Knicks boss Pat Riley. "Because of my size I con't shop off the rack," says Patrick, "so most of my clothes are made-to-meosure by Donno Koron." Today's dressed-up NBA is "o competition thing. In the locker room we oll look to see who has on the best suit or nicest tie. And if we don't like what someone is wearing, we'll let him know!"





WILLIE BROWN

"Without a hat, you haven't completed the wardrabe," says Son Francisco Mayar Willie Brown (obove left). His callection is mostly from Mrs. Dewson's Hats on Fillmore: stingy-brim hats for casual-wear ond, of course, strow hats for summer. "I corry two hats in my car—once the fog rolls in at night, you'll ruin the straw. Unless it's a Panamonion." The mayor stops into Wilkes Boshford every other day, much to the chogrin of his power-dressing rival and fellow Brioni fon Lawrence Ellison. "He jokes that I get the good stuff first," Brown says. "Tell him to try shopping on a budget!"

HOWIE LONG

There was never ony stopping Howie Long (obove)—not on the footboll field as Pro Bowl defensive linemon for the Raiders, not in the booth os on Emmy-winning sportscoster, not in the movie Broken Arrow. Now odd top-drower dresser to the list. "I go for an understoted look," Long says. "I like Donno Koron. Her suits are well made for the othletic build. They are boggy in the thighs but tapered at the woist." Long soys the biggest chollenge for guys with big builds is "finding o woman who likes brood, muscle-bound shoulders." And? "Fortunately, I found one."

MATT LAUER

Newscaster Matt Louer (left) colls his morning gig on the *Today* show the best job in the world. So you won't heor him complaining about his 4:30 woke-up coll every morning. Louer's suits ore his own. He dresses at home, no stylist or wordrobe person nearby. Though he doesn't like to name nomes, chances are he'll wear Armani or Ermenegildo Zegna. Louer shops ot Richard's in Greenwich, Connecticut, where he had o port-time gig while in high school. Foshion is a big part of his life: His fioncée, Dutch beouty Annette Roque, is a model for J. Crew.

WILL SMITH

Perhaps Will Smith is the guy who best exemplifies the ability of today's new gentleman to wear a wide range of clothes. He can slick it up for *Men in Black* or get jiggy with it in hip-hop gear. These days, Smith is into golf. He has a 150-yard, par-three hole on his estate. If he's as influential on the sport as he has been in music and movies, perhaps we'll all be wearing baseball caps and jerseys on the back nine.

"You know, Viagra's the gift that just keeps on giving."

IN THE COMPANY OF MEN:
THE LOST SCENE

A NAUGHTY SECRET FROM THE CONFESSIONS OF CHAD. READ IT, BUT DON'T TELL MOM

WRITTEN BY DIRECTOR NEIL LABUTE

THE MOST disturbing movie of 1997 was also the most misunderstood. Written and directed by Neil LaBute, *In the Company of Men* rattled audiences with characters who utter things most men only think about and who do things most men only talk about. (In *Your Friends and Neighbors*, LaBute's 1998 film about mean people and bad sex, he adds the inner workings of women to the mix.) Though *In the Company of Men* is about alienation in the corporate world, it is often mistakenly labeled an exercise in misogyny. In it, the movie's misanthropic antihero Chad (played by Aaron Eckhart) destroys his rival by recruiting him in a scheme to seduce a deaf girl and then break her heart. Even today a mention of Chad or the movie itself throws some people into a cold rage. Now there's more—a climactic monolog in which Chad recalls a special lady in his life. It comes from LaBute's original script but was never shot.

"Audiences always want to know, 'Why?' Or, 'Where did you get the idea?'" says LaBute. "They also like to add, 'What's the matter with you?' They are even more inquisitive when things aren't tied up neatly at the end of the film. When faced with these questions—audiences always look for answers from the writer—I'm the ultimate fence-sitter. The biggest concerns with *In the Company of Men* involve Chad: 'Why is he Chad, and how can he do the things he does?' A writer likes to answer, 'Why not? Why not explore—who says we can't go there?' As I fleshed out his character, I worked on detailing a day from his past. As a writer I needed this scene, but as a director I thought it was too overt. It wasn't written as an explanation for Chad's behavior. I didn't want to assign everything in his personality to one episode in his youth, but invariably it would have been seen that way. Ultimately, it was useful only in giving both Aaron and myself a place to begin with Chad.

"For those who ponder this scene, it's best to think of it as merely another piece of the puzzle that is Chad. If nothing else, consider it a Christmas card from me to you."

YMCA POOL—EARLY EVENING

In a quiet corner of the lap pool at the neighborhood Y, CHAD *is pulled up against the tile, holding on to the side and lazily kicking his feet in the blue water. A* CO-WORKER *drifts nearby.* CHAD*'s eyes are closed as he speaks.*

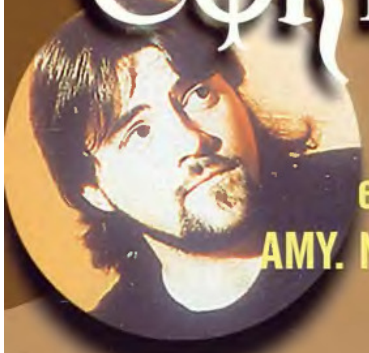
CHAD

I'm lying in my bed, bunk beds we had at home, maybe 16 years old, and I'm jerking off. Normal, right? I've skipped school, home for the day, *Gilligan's Island* is not coming on for another two hours, and I start playing with myself. [*Beat*] So I'm doing it, going at it, looking at the poster of Farrah and on and on. . . . I glance up—God knows the actual time that's passed—and my fucking mom is standing at the door of my room, watching me. Jesus! I start sputtering, making up medical reasons for my hobby, and I'm not messing with *(concluded on page 194)*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEORGE GEORGIOU

CLERKS

THE CLERK, THE GIRL AND THE CORDUROY HAND JOB



filmmaker Kevin Smith sliced and diced the work ethic in CLERKS and shredded sexual myths in CHASING AMY. Now he's set his sights on a bigger target: Organized religion

Playboy Profile By STEPHAN TALTY

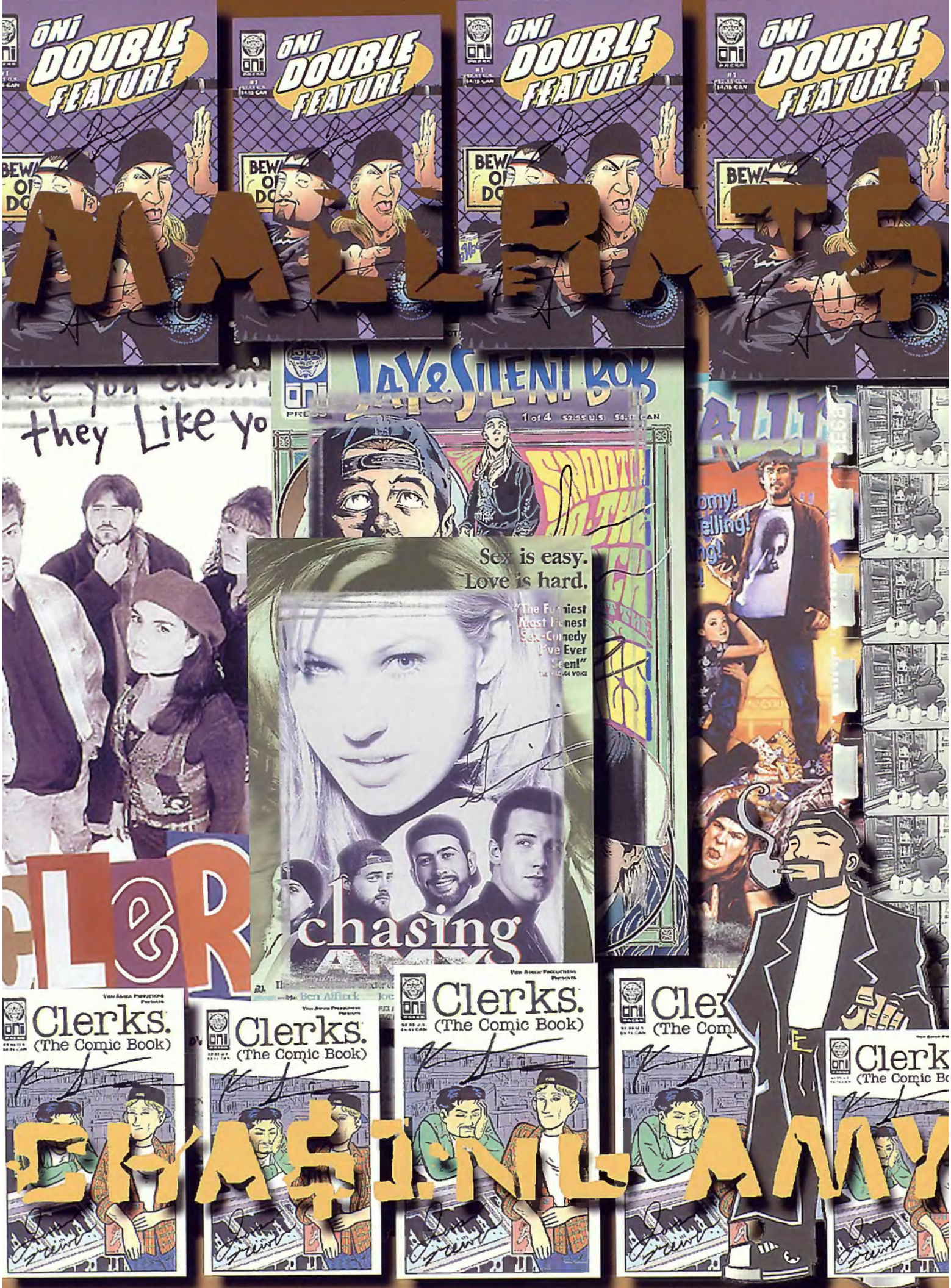
"Sad, isn't it?" Kevin Smith says, grinning. A bit dazed, I can only nod.

In my hands is *Chronic Odyssey of the Anachronistic Enigma*, the first of two bursting scrapbooks of notes, rejection letters, scripts, vital statistics, pictures and report cards—in fact, seemingly everything except the foreskin from his circumcision—that the director of *Clerks* collected during his youth. "I've got trunkfuls of the stuff," he says matter-of-factly. Never let it be said that Smith is afraid of public exposure; some would say he has made a career of it.

We're hanging out in Smith's apartment in Red Bank, New Jersey. In person, the 28-year-old Smith is irrepressibly witty and sharp-minded; his voice shakes slightly at first, but his natural confidence soon shows itself. The dark eyes behind his metal-rimmed glasses are coolly appraising, but they flare with warmth when he laughs.

I return to the *Odyssey*. Among the love letters and break-up notes ("I feel lied to, cheated, used, deceived, misled, foolish, gullible, angry, hurt, naive and basically pissed on—good job" writes "Amy") are clues to the beginnings of the slacker sensibility that shot Smith to stardom. "There is a large, esoteric sense of humor at work behind the universe," writes the teenage Smith. "And you spend your whole life straining to understand the joke. The best you can hope for is to counter with your own brilliant one-liner."

Smith has countered well. With *Clerks*, his 1994 breakout debut, he became one of the godfathers of Nineties indie film and helped shape its


ONI DOUBLE FEATURE
MALBATS
they Like Yo
Jay & Silent Bob
1 of 4
Sex is easy.
Love is hard.
chasing
Clerks.
(The Comic Book)
CLERKS

priorities: low budgets, sharp wit, personal revelation. After *Clerks* came the humiliating defeat of *Mallrats* and a brilliant comeback with the boy-meets-lesbian story *Chasing Amy*.

Next spring his most daring, ambitious and expensive film yet, a religious black comedy called *Dogma*, will, he hopes, debut at the Cannes Film Festival. *Dogma* is bound to be hugely controversial; if the Vatican issued fatwas, Smith would certainly earn one for this movie. His comment on the picture—"I think we have a movie that will knock people off their chairs"—is a rare understatement.

It's been a hell of a ride for the kid from a clam diggers' town.

Later, Smith and I walk down Red Bank's Broad Street, which has the charm and the bustle of *It's a Wonderful Life*'s Bedford Falls. "Did you hear that young George Bailey's having trouble down at the bank?" Smith jokes. The director is dressed in his trademark semieccentric ensemble: khaki shorts and green-and-black wool overcoat in 30-degree weather. The long coat sweeps along like a cape and is either a tribute to the comic superheroes he loves or a cover for the weight he is trying to lose.

Smith is often recognized in town; a brown Camaro beeps at a stoplight and he gives a wave. The younger faces on the street nod to him; Smith is like the secret mayor of Red Bank youth. But unlike George Bailey, the director left his Bedford Falls and got burned in the big world. Now he seems to have found his place in the world—*his* world, small-town New Jersey—again.

•

Smith was born in Red Bank on August 2, 1970 and raised in the nearby clamming town of Highlands. He is Highlands' most famous native son, but he recently got into trouble with the locals by calling it a white trash enclave—a term Smith used with a certain working-class pride. A resident, Dotty Kovic, wrote him an irate letter: "How dare you call Highlands white trash? I think you're the white trash."

When Smith was a child, his days were scheduled around his father's late shifts at the post office. The elder Smith began as a go-getter but grew to despise his job. "I always pitied my fucking father," Smith says. He remembers his dad getting up some days and being unable to face the grind; he would ask someone to call him in. If some people see slackers as rich kids who can't be bothered to join the rat race, Smith comes from a tougher school. Early on, he vowed never to work at something he didn't enjoy. His admitted laziness is a kind of proletarian statement.

Smith was a B and C student who videotaped the school basketball games and put on *Saturday Night Live*–style skits. A chubby kid, he had a minicrisis when his humpbacked fourth grade teacher pointed out "the gut on you, Mr. Smith!" (an event recorded on the *Odyssey* time line). Like many an overweight kid, he became an observer—and a joker. "I found humor is a real great aphrodisiac," says Smith. "Just make a broad laugh and you're in like Flynn."

After high school, Smith drifted through a series of jobs at delis, convenience stores and community centers. A stab at college didn't work out. Smith was headed toward a life of underachievement and what-ifs, an existence out of a Springsteen song.

The burning bush that spoke to Smith and sparked his career was a 1991 film by a 30-year-old filmmaker from Austin, Texas. On his 21st birthday, Smith went to see Richard Linklater's comedy *Slacker* and came away a changed man. "That was the first movie I saw that was set in the director's hometown. It wasn't shot on a soundstage, it wasn't shot in New York or Los Angeles or Chicago. I mean, how great is that? And when I started thinking about it, I was like, 'Well, right, if Richard can make this movie in Austin, I can make a movie where I live.' And then it started to appeal to me—the idea of regional cinema. You know, as much as you think you're talking about where you live, you wind up talking about where everybody lives."

Smith was working in a local Quick Stop convenience store and decided to set his film there. He borrowed the life-in-a-day structure from Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*, maxed out more than a dozen credit cards and sold his beloved comic-book collection to meet the $27,000 budget. For talent, he looked around him. Where others might have seen blue-collar layabouts, Smith saw possibilities.

"A lot of people wrote us off," says Smith. "I have friends who are amazingly gifted, very talented. But they weren't really open to the possibilities. When they watched movies, they said, 'Oh, other people do that shit.' I sat two of my friends down and said, 'I'm going to go to film school and when I get back we're going to make a movie together.' And they looked at me like I had said, 'I'm going to give you two guys a blow job.'"

The shockingly witty *Clerks* tells the ribald story of Dante, an indecisive convenience store worker who is besieged by a former girlfriend, annoying customers, hilarious but maddening friends and the myriad pressures of working-class life. The picture draws directly from much of Smith's experience and sketches out many of the themes that run through his work. The fascination with *Star Wars*, the surgically precise social caricatures, the dick jokes, the humid closeness of male friendships and the laziness of the main character all reflect on the writer-director. So does the obsession with female infidelity.

If *Slacker* was the event that shaped Smith's professional life, the one that marked his personal existence had to do with a girlfriend named Kim Loughran, a pair of corduroys and a hand job. Though it happened more than ten years ago, Smith still tells the story with passion. He was a superromantic teenager at the time and had not yet been burned in love.

"Kim was driving back from a track meet with this dude, and they were real chummy and shit. This dude was wearing corduroys, and she's rubbing the corduroy on his pants, and she says, 'I always liked the feel of corduroy.' And all of a sudden she winds up giving him a hand job. So for a year, I mercilessly hounded her about it: 'Is that all that happened? Did you touch his dick? Were lips involved?' I was real childish. But that was the darkest time, man. I think that's where a lot of *Clerks* comes from. And after that, I never wore fucking corduroys again."

When we get to his office, we meet Kim as we walk in. She is now Smith's assistant. "I told him the hand job story," Smith announces blithely.

Kim looks up. "Did you also tell him about the time you practically threw me on the cafeteria floor because of it?" she shoots back. They crack up. It's weirdly like high school never ended.

Clerks was a Sundance baby. Smith took it to Robert Redford's indie festival, but by the final screening it still hadn't sold. It looked as though Smith would be working at the Quick Stop for life, until Miramax' co-chairman Harvey Weinstein showed up. At a restaurant after the screening, Smith got the proverbial nod to join the big table, where Weinstein told him he wanted to buy the movie. Then Weinstein, "full of piss and vinegar," according to Smith, explained how he would market the movie and open it up to the widest audiences. "I loved this guy," recalls Smith. "He's smart and he smokes a lot and eats a lot, and that's my kind of dude. And he says 'fuck' an awful lot."

Clerks made $2.8 million and established Smith, for better or worse, as a voice of American youth. Even corporate America has come calling. Late in the day we're driving through New

(continued on page 216)

"We're watching videos of vintage office parties!"

LEONARDO DICAPRIO and KATE WINSLET Unsinkable
***Titanic*'s star-crossed lovers launch a generational sea change.**

SEX STARS 1998

movies launched a new generation, tv talent got hot and supermodels—surprise—reigned

text by GRETCHEN EDGREN **There was, without question, a changing of the guard for sex stars in 1998, from the Old Reliables to the Young and Fearless. It began with the spectacular on-screen sinking of the HMS *Titanic*, which floated its young lovers, 23-year-olds Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio, straight to the top of box-office attractions. And it wasn't the nautical disaster's special effects that packed the cineplexes; it was the film's Romeo-and-Juliet love story. Matt Damon, 27, and Ben Affleck, 26, demonstrated both acting and filmmaking chops in *Good Will Hunting*, a project they'd nurtured from their own screenplay through development, finally winning an Academy Award (one of the few not swallowed up by *Titanic*'s wake). Catherine Zeta-Jones, a 28-year-old actress well known in her native Wales but** *(text continued on page 223)*

CATHERINE ZETA-JONES Unbuttoned
Welsh-born beauty, her bodice ripped in *Zorro*, rebounds from Banderas to Connery.

ANTONIO BANDERAS Man behind another mask?
Studly Spaniard doffs *Zorro* disguise to make a pass at the Phantom.

NEVE CAMPBELL Screaming queen
TV fave conquers a teen franchise.

HEIDI MARK All aboard!
Playmate hired as cruise director for *The Love Boat*.

PAMELA ANDERSON The Pam what am
Out of an abusive marriage, she becomes a certified VIP.

NAOMI CAMPBELL Model behavior
Hot mannequin hosts a kids' benefit for Nelson Mandela.

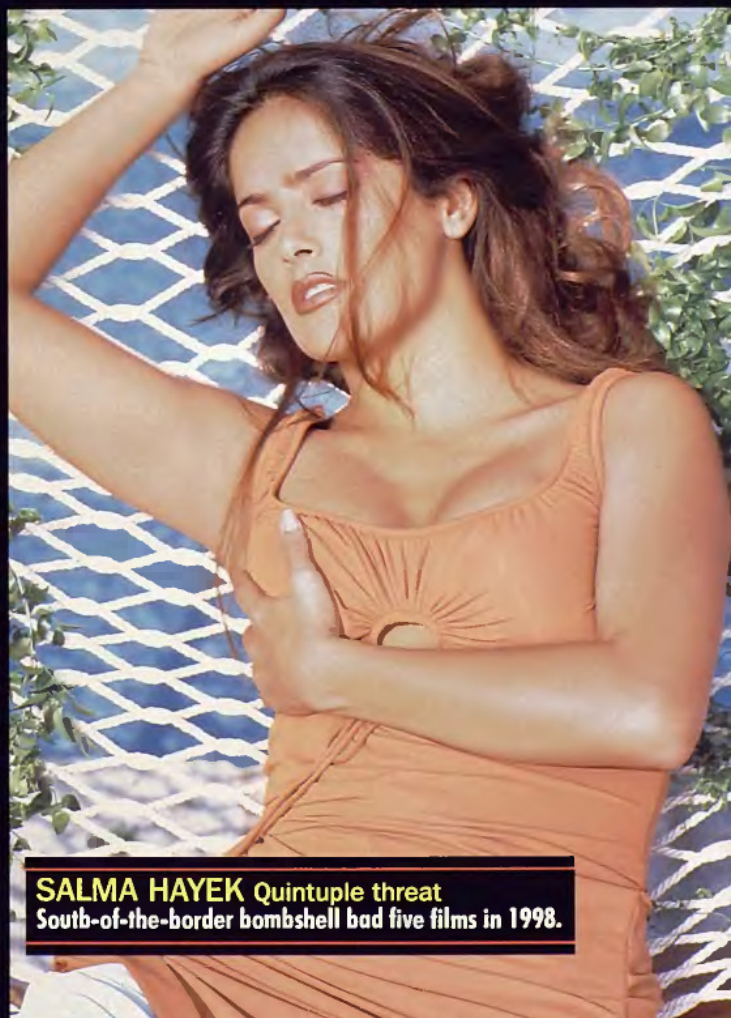
CAMERON DIAZ Natural wonder
What you see is what you get: great personality, no implants.

GERI HALLIWELL Go girl!
Ginger Spice gets a gushy goodbye note from Prince Charles.

DOWNTOWN JULIE BROWN Smokin'
Former MTV and E Television personality hosts a new show for Cigar TV.

ELLE MACPHERSON Model mom
Jet-setting supermadel juggles a baby and a profitable career.

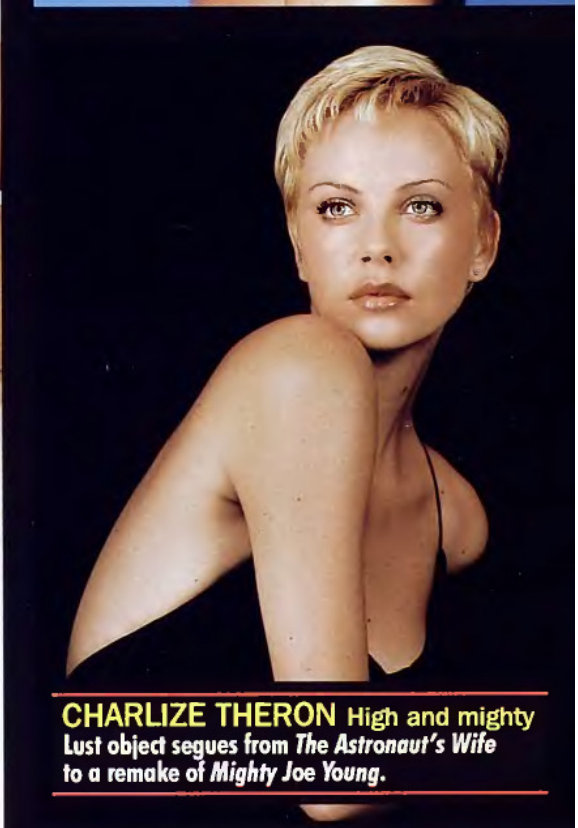
VICTORIA SILVSTEDT Poster girl
Last year's PMOY poses far a steamy film-festival proma.



SALMA HAYEK Quintuple threat
Soutb-of-the-border bombshell bad five films in 1998.

JENNY MCCARTHY Bodacious Betty
FHM's number one sexpot wins a role in the *Archie* film.

OSCAR DE LA HOYA Boffo boxer
Pugilism's biggest draw brings sex appeal to the ring.



CHARLIZE THERON High and mighty
Lust object segues from *The Astronaut's Wife* to a remake of *Mighty Joe Young*.

BEN AFFLECK and **MATT DAMON** *Hunting* licensed
Since creating (ond starring in) *Good Will Hunting*, these pals can do no wrong.

CARMEN ELECTRA High voltage
She's Electrafying in *Chosen One: Legend of the Raven.*

DONNA D'ERRICO New beach beckons
Former lifeguard lands her own MTV fun-on-the-sand show, *Prima Donna.*

JENNIFER LOPEZ Leading Latina
Sizzling senorita lights Clooney's fire on-screen—and she sings, too.

PATRICIA ARQUETTE Triangular
Well-connected actress specializes in cinematic love triangles.

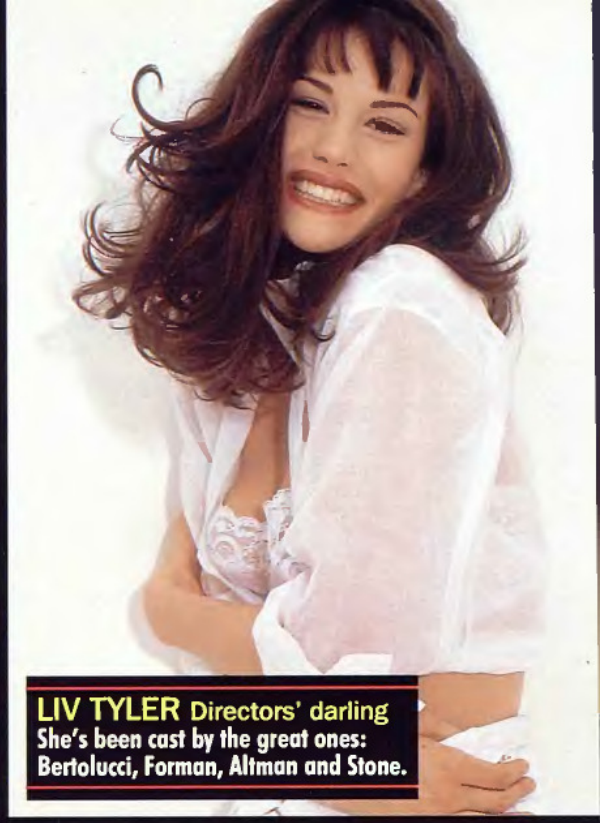
GENA LEE NOLIN Bye-bye, *Baywatch*
After saying she'd stay, she left—for "other opportunities" aad acting school.

DREW BARRYMORE Cinderella story
She reinvigorates the foiry tale—with a Scottish Prince Charming.

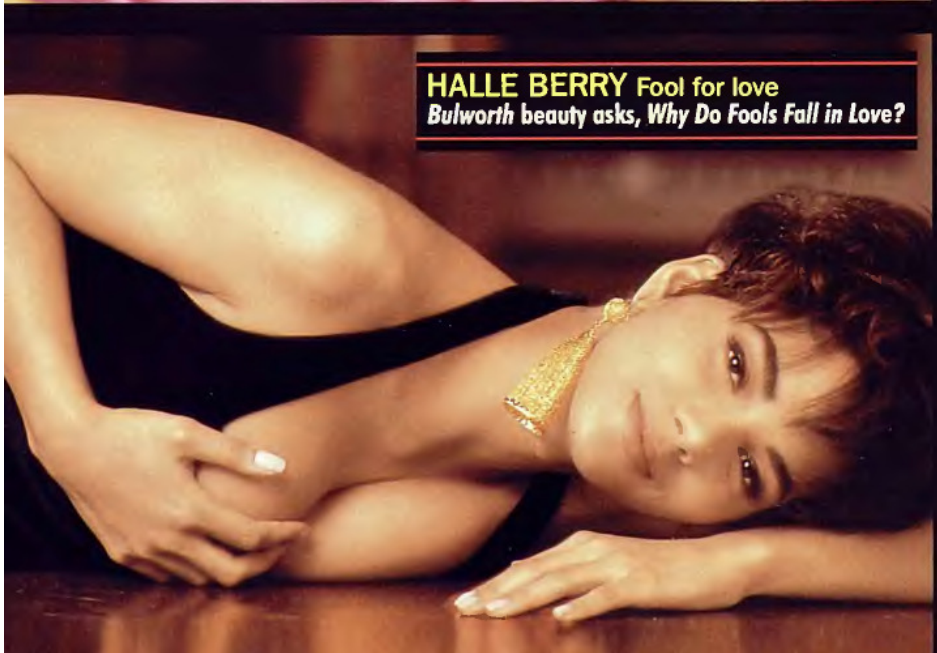
LINDA BRAVA Fit fiddler
Violin-playing beauty has strings, but few inhibitions, attached.

KAREN MC DOUGAL *Playboy*'s pick
Former schoolteacher gets high marks as PMOY.

TRACI BINGHAM Beached bombshell
Grounded by *Baywatch*, she weds in a gown by a royal couturier.



LIV TYLER Directors' darling
She's been cast by the great ones: Bertolucci, Forman, Altman and Stone.



HALLE BERRY Fool for love
Bulworth beauty asks, *Why Do Fools Fall in Love?*

JIM CARREY Remake, anyone?
After his original *Truman*, he's recycling Walter Mitty and Mr. Limpet.

CINDY CRAWFORD Tapped for the tube
Supermodel bride hosts *Sex With Cindy Crawford* special.

CELEBRITY Christmas Carols

HUMOR BY ROBERT S. WIEDER

KENNETH STARR

(To the tune of "Angels We Have Heard on High!")

Angels I would serve on high
With subpoenas to appear.
I'd make Jesus testify,
If I thought it would nail Bill's rear.

[Chorus]
Eupho-ooooo-ooooo-ooooo-ria,
Tightening the screws is
Eupho-ooooo-ooooo-ooooo-ria,
Being page one news is.

I'll use anything it takes:
Rumor, threat, blackmail or fear.
Christmas no damned difference makes,
I know just one kind of cheer:

[Chorus]
Eupho-ooooo-ooooo-ooooo-ria,
Making others cower,
Eupho-ooooo-ooooo-ooooo-ria
Comes from unchecked power now.

(To the tune of "The Christmas Song—Chestnuts Roosting on on Open Fire")

Bill's nuts roosting on on open fire,
Next to Starr's, that little shit.
And Linda Tripp, neatly cut into strips,
With Ginsburg sizzling on a spit.

While we're at it, dip the medio
One by one in boiling pitch.
You testify to the sleazy shit I
Had to, girl, you too will be a bitch.

Christmas Eve, I'll be at home alone.
Guys don't flock to some babe who
Wound up reporting in detail in court
On the last guy she blew.

MONICA LEWINSKY

BILL CLINTON

(To the tune of "Away in a Manger")

Away from great danger, I think I'm OK.
I've made it this far, but just how I can't say.
I'm deluged with scandals, but my polls just rise
Like "Slick Willie Junior" when I think of thighs.

This Christmas, I give thanks and wish the world joy,
And pray that they catch Ken Starr with a young boy,
And cherish the lesson that God hath me taught:
Have faith, and believe, and just don't admit squat.

(To the tune of "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear")

It's time to make our bid quite clear:
And don't try to stop us, you can't.
Today the Net, then the world, no sweat;
Submit or be crushed like an ant.

[Chorus]
Soon Windows systems will make your meals,
Your purchases and your plans, too.
Your voice they'll know, and have cameras, so
That they can keep close tabs on you.

I plan to buy up the government
And shut down the parts I don't like.
The jerks at Justice, ho, they go first,
And Reno, that creepy old dyke.

[Chorus]
And then we must repeal antitrust
Laws, so we can—whee—"innovate."
(Which means absorbing Netscape and Sun
And anything we don't create.)

I'll rule the planet, but have no fear:
I'm not a despot, just a geek.
I still pay folks to select my clothes
And get lost in my house twice a week.

[Chorus]
So Merry Christmas to one and all!
You'll get this wish soon, by e-mail.
Unless you're not running Windows, in
Which case, well, I hope you like jail.

BILL GATES

(To the tune of "O Little Town of Bethlehem")

O little minds and bedlam,
You've been so good to me.
With staged fistfights and grotesque lies,
And millions tuned to see.
"Transvestite moms!" "Gay Nazis!"
"An inbred family!"
At Christmastime, thanks for mankind's
Great gullibility.

When bluenose groups applied the heat,
The other talk shows caved.
The saps—it's tasteless crap with which
The road to wealth is paved.
I've booked some folks whose foreplay
Involves incontinence.
Be careful what you call me, though—
Real whores may take offense.

I know you'll love our Christmas show:
Our "Santa" wears cute frocks,
And lonely shepherds show us all
What's meant by "tending flocks."
A pregnant "virgin" tells her
Spouse how that can be,
And he then tries to kill her
As folks chant, "Jerry, Jerry!"

JERRY SPRINGER

ALLY MC BEAL

(To the tune of "O Come, All Ye Faithful")

O come, Ally faithful,
Loyal viewers of me,
You watch me and love me
Though your dates get bored.

Like me, you're female, hoping to find the male:
I'm blunt; you can't ignore me,
So loopy you adore me,
I'm you, so you root for me
I strike a chord.

Though an illusion,
I capture your confusion,
I'm cute and successful
Yet life's stressful and weird.

I'm great! Behold me! (Wish someone would hold me.)
I'm cuddly yet neurotic,
My love life's episodic,
I want respect and raw dick,
And to be revered.

I make you feel you're
Not such a schlemiel
At least there's no dancing
Baby making you rove

No more breast-beating: Here's my season's greeting—
Amid your celebration
Don't toast me with elation
'Cause, girl, I'm the creation
Of a guy named Dave.

(To the tune of
"It's Beginning to Look Like Christmas")

It's beginning to look a lot like sequel,
Every time we do
The numbers based on the gross
From "Titanic," feeling grows:
We'd be nuts not to make "Titanic II."

Maybe "Titanic Nights: The Untold Story,"
Or "Titanic: 2002."
The wreck, it ain't going no place.
Just throw in a speedboat chase,
A comet, nude sex scenes and some kung fu.

Get Matt Damon, or almost any Hanson
For young girls to adore,
And I think I can promise you
(If we don't blow it like "Speed 2")
That we'll really score.
Life's beginning to look a lot like Christmas
Once more.

JAMES CAMERON

GARTH BROOKS

(To the tune of "Silver Bells")

Hear the bells? My stuff sells, and the cash registers jingle.
I could sing Wagner's "Ring" and ship it gold the same day.

[Chorus]
Being Garth Brooks
I am sure looks
Like great fun, but not so:
'Cause this regular-guy front ain't easy.
If Garth's fans learn
How much I earn
Well, they just might get pissed
That Garth makes their year's take in two days.

Wear old jeans, eat baked beans and drive a pickup in public.
Understand, Garth's a brand—a product just like Coors or Lay's.

[Chorus]
And at Christmas
Garth of course must
Issue greetings to all,
On his own TV holiday special.
Then I'm off to
Aspen, Cortu,
Or my yacht at St. Kitts,
Where I hope I'll continue to hear . . .

Ringing bells, as Garth sells, because his fans still refuse to
Face the fact: It's an act—I'm only "Garth Brooks" for pay.

PHIL KNIGHT

(To the tune of "What Child Is This?")

What child is this, who begs to rest
After just ten hours at the factory?
For what we pay (seven bucks a day),
Such an attitude's not satisfactory.

[Chorus]
Worldwide, kids have learned to say,
"A hundred bucks for a shoe? No way!"
Swoosh, swoosh, Nike stock's gone down.
Jordan's no longer worth all that money.

What child is this, who wants time off
On Christmas Day, to make merry?
We took a dump from the Asian slump
And our bottom line's looking quite scary

[Chorus]
Work, work, kid, and just be glad
That you're not at our plant in Islamabad.
Christmas doesn't come for free,
So "just do it" or lose your job, sonny.

(To the tune of "Little Drummer Boy")

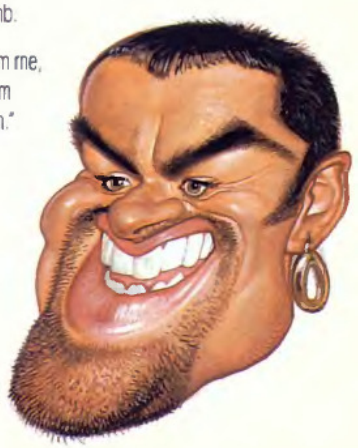
Said the cop to me,
Pa rumpa pum pum
"Hey, that's a felony!"
Pa rumpa pum pum
"This is a place to pee!"
Pa rumpa pum pum
"Not that perversity!
Just what are you, scum?
Come along, bum.
And wipe off your thumb."

What came over me?
Pa rumpa pum pum
(Well, I did, actually.)
Pa rumpa pum pum
I'd just stopped off to wee,
Pa rumpa pum pum
And then an urge struck me,
And whom, I succumbed.
Boy, was that dumb.
(But it was fun.)

In court I had my day,
Pa rumpa pum pum
Where what else could I say,
Pa rumpa pum pum
But "I'm not sick, I'm gay!"
Pa rumpa pum pum
It worked! No jail! Hurray!
So break out the rum,
Christmas has come,
Toast till we're numb.

Yuletide cheers from me,
Pa rumpa pum pum
And my "little chum."

GEORGE MICHAEL



ILLUSTRATIONS BY SEBASTIAN KRUGER

Ancient Mariner

(continued from page 140)

Don't know that Ronnie did either, far as that goes. More just like—bam—he had to nail that thing.

who they were.

Thank you. Very kind of you. Seven-and-Seven.

What Ronnie did, worked for a manufacturing concern in town. Patterson Roofing Solutions. They make a, well, a kind of a goopus, has industrial applications. They spray it on a roof, it reflects back 80 percent of the sun's radiant energy. Beaumont Texas, you wanna get rid of that radiant energy. I don't know where you're from, but around here radiant energy is something we'd just as soon reflect right on back where it come from. Thank you anyway. Two kinds of places, one where they say, Well, it's a dry heat, the other where they say, Damn, it's hot. That's what Beaumont Texas is, just Damn, it's hot. . . . Well, OK, yes. I guess that *would* be a third kind of place, where it ain't hot in the first place. You're not from around here, are you? But that doesn't alter the point I'm making, which is that Beaumont Texas is a damn-it's-hot kind of place.

So the way this stuff works is this goopus is got ceramic in it. It looks liquidy, but it's got microscopic ceramic particles in it, reflect the radiant energy. Plus it's white. Actually you can get different colors. If you don't want the white they can do you another color. Be a little less efficient than the white. But still.

Yeah, I did say industrial applications. Nobody puts it on their homes.

No, I don't know why they don't put it on their homes. I suppose they could. But you know, it's funny, most people sit where you're sitting, they're more interested in how Radio Ronnie come to get stabbed in the neck and his two little daughters watching than in this goopy shit Patterson puts on factory roofs. I don't know why people don't use it on their goddamn house.

So Ronnie was a salesman for Patterson Roofing Solutions. Covered Beaumont, large part of east Texas, Port Arthur, even into Louisiana. Not a bad salesman. Liked. Respected, far as that goes. Drank here. Not to excess. Did drink, though. And that was his stool.

So he starts fornicating. How do I know? Well this is my barstool, and that you sit upon his. And he was dragging his sorry ass in here, getting sorrier by the day so I know something's wrong. And it's like he's just waiting for me to ask him, so one day when his chin is down on the bartop I say Ronnie, and he says Uh-huh, and I say What is it?

And he says, I am one son of a bitch.

I say Yeah? He says Yeah, I been cheatin' on my wife. I am one lousy son of a bitch. Cheatin' on Alice, acting like a heel, fornicating with Marcia Ziegler.

Oh, says I. Marcia Ziegler also works for Patterson. Reception. Dark-haired woman. Scrawny. Surprised me, actually, that Ronnie was moved to fornicate with such a scrawny-assed woman. His wife Alice is very well proportioned. Two kids or not, she's a more attractive woman than Marcia Ziegler any day.

He says, Can you believe that shit, officer candidate? Which is what we called each other sometimes from when we were in OCS, though we both bagassed out.

I say Yeah, well, Jesus, Ronnie, cut it out.

And he shakes his head and says, I can't, man. I just can't.

Ronnie was an honest man. You'd look at him and you might think the opposite, just from how he dressed and being in sales and being easy with people like he was. See, he was pretty trim, my age—40, both 40—and wore Tony Lama boots, lizard, pressed jeans, thin leather jacket nice and buttery. And of course his beard. Going a little to gray but always neatly trimmed. Like he took a little too much care with it. So you figure, well he's a smoothy, but my point is no, he wasn't. Not at all. You sit on a barstool next to a man who's full of shit and pretty soon you'll know it. And Ronnie was foursquare, even with that beard.

Now, Marcia Ziegler I happen to know. To say hello to, anyway. Scrawny-assed, as I had occasion to mention. With a way of talking that's a little snide. Like she can't say anything straight out, it's always got some dig or angle to it, always comes out the side of her mouth. Straight hair, bottom bob, hangs down like a little curtain her face peeks through. Ears stick out like a chipmunky animal. Don't know what Ronnie saw in her. Scrawny-assed.

I know that some of the other men she'd seen, eligible men, she'd pretty quick either dump or get dumped, either way saying snide things out of the corner of her mouth. Always talked like that. When she talks snide, if you take offense she'll laugh and say Just kidding out of the side of her mouth. Slip away at an angle, you can't talk to her head-on. Laughs a lot, Marcia, but just kind of heh-heh-heh; I never once heard her laugh like something actually struck her funny. Thin woman. Don't care for her.

Don't know that Ronnie did either, far as that goes. Not in the palsy-walsy sense. More just like *bam* he had to nail that thing. I mean not just once, but keep bangin' on it. Missed days at the bar 'cause he was out nailing Marcia Ziegler. Went on a company trip once, this was some time after he confessed to me. Patterson organized a trip on the Nueces, canoeing, camping. Alice agrees Ronnie should go, have a little vacation from the girls—they had two little girls, Fonda and Annabelle, witnessed his death in the end, though at this point they haven't yet, now he's just out canoeing—and Marcia Ziegler is on the trip as well. First night they beach the boats, make a camp, have a fish fry. Relaxing afterwards at the campfire and people say Ronnie gets all shifty-eyed and excuses himself. And they realize Marcia's gone too. Pretty soon from up in the woods they hear this caterwauling like a puma in heat, and Marcia's screaming, out and out screaming, "Fuck me Ronnie Harper! Fuck me Ronnie Harper!" Everyone at the fire sits there, they don't know where to look. Then the nervous laughs. And it keeps going, and they say it just got positively creepy, that screaming from out in the woods, like a wildcat over fresh kill. Creepy. Then, after a quiet spell, Ronnie saunters back to the fire, not with his chest thrown out like a high school kid bagged his first piece of ass, just shifty-eyed. Everybody tries not to look at him. And then Marcia waits what I guess she thinks is a decent interval, which only makes it worse what with the suspense, and then she wanders back. Humming.

Well starting from then, of course behind Ronnie's back, everybody calls him Fuck Me Ronnie Harper. Gets shortened to FM Ronnie Harper, then just Radio Ronnie. Folks figure that's obscure enough they start calling him Radio Ronnie to his face. I don't approve of that kind of thing, elbows and guffaws, but tell you the truth I don't think Ronnie even noticed.

See, he wasn't noticing much of anything around then. I mean, before that, you'd see Ronnie and he'd chat and be easy and free, but now Ronnie is always rushing away, kind of squirrelly, saying I'm late to meet a client, but you always knew damn well who that client was. There was no joy in it, though, you could see that. It was this desperate look in his eyes like Ronnie was inside banging on the windows saying, Sorry, my dick is calling the

(continued on page 202)

Little Annie Fanny

BY RAY LAGO AND BILL SCHORR

ALLY McBEAL, MONICA LEWINSKY AND CATHY AREN'T THE ONLY SINGLE WOMEN HAVING TROUBLE FINDING DESIRABLE DATES IN THE BIG CITY. EVEN TWO ENCHANTING CREATURES SUCH AS ANNIE AND WANDA ARE SPENDING CHRISTMAS EVE WITHOUT MALE COMPANIONSHIP. CUDDLING AND ROASTING THEIR CHESTNUTS BY AN OPEN FIRE...IT'S TIMES LIKE THESE THAT CAUSE WANDA TO REFLECT ON A CHRISTMAS CLASSIC....

'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS, AND ALL THROUGH THE TOWN, NO CREATURE YOU'D CALL "MR. RIGHT" COULD BE FOUND.

THE VIBRATOR HUNG BY THE CHIMNEY WITH CARE, IN HOPES THAT NEW BATTERIES SOON WOULD BE THERE.

THE DOORMAN WAS SLEEPING, HIS DESK FOR A BED, WHILE DREAMING THE SPICE GIRLS WERE GIVING HIM HEAD.

AND ANNIE IN A NIGHTIE, AND ME WEARING LESS, HAD JUST SETTLED IN FOR A LONG WINTER'S REST.

WHEN OUT IN THE HALL THERE AROSE SUCH A CLATTER, ANNIE SPRANG FROM HER BED TO SEE WHAT WAS THE MATTER!

ACROSS THE APARTMENT SHE FLEW LIKE A STREAK, OPENED THE DOOR, DOWN THE HALL TOOK A PEEK.

THE LIGHT ON HER BREASTS MADE THEM GLISTEN LIKE GOLD, AND SHOWED HOW HER NIPPLES STOOD OUT FROM THE COLD,

WHEN WHO TO HER STILL-DROWSY EYES SHOULD APPEAR?
BUT BENTON BATTBARTON WITH DRINKS, AND A LEER.
DRESSED IN A BEARD AND RED SUIT LIKE ST. NICKIE,
HE CLEARLY WAS THINKING OF GETTING A QUICKIE.

WHEN HE SPOTTED HER BREASTS, TO HIS FACE A GRIN CAME
AND HE WHISTLED AND SHOUTED AND CALLED THEM BY NAME!

WOW, BOOBIES! WOW, TA-TAS!
SO ROUND AND SO LISSOME!
OH ANNIE, SWEET ANNIE,
PLEASE CAN'T I JUST
KISS 'EM?

YOU CAN'T KISS THEM
OR FEEL THEM,
OR **TOUCH** THEM AT ALL.
AND TO ASK ME AT CHRISTMAS
YOU **SURE** HAVE SOME GALL!

BATTBARTON, CRESTFALLEN,
WAS CRUSHED-HE COULD TELL,
IN ANNIE'S BLUE EYES,
HE WAS SANTA FROM HELL.
AS HE STAGGERED AWAY,
ANNIE BLEARILY STAMMERED,

HE'S NICE ENOUGH SOBER,
BUT **NOT** WHEN HE'S
HAMMERED.

JUST THEN, IN A TWINKLING,
SHE HEARD ON THE ROOF A
SUDDEN NOISE-COULD IT BE
THE RETURN OF THAT GOOF?

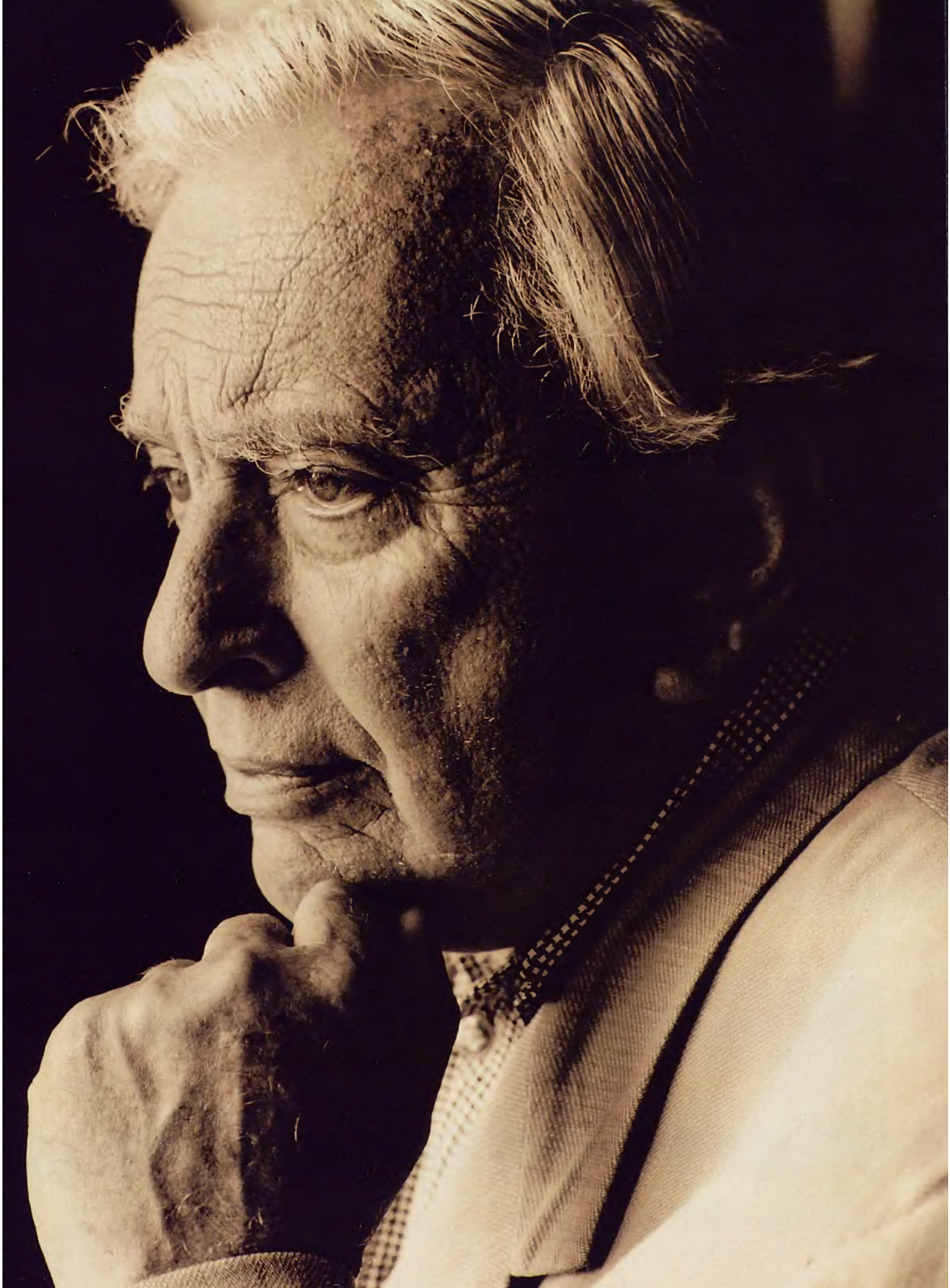
AND THEN, BEFORE ANNIE
COULD GET BACK TO BED,
HE CAME DOWN THE CHIMNEY
AND CRASHED ON HIS HEAD.

STILL DRESSED ALL IN RED, WITH ACCENTS OF WHITE,
HE WAS COVERED WITH SOOT AND OUT LIKE A LIGHT.
A BAGFUL OF GOODIES LAY STREWN ON THE FLOOR,
LABELED PRADA, ARMANI AND CHRISTIAN DIOR!

HIS EYES WERE SO GLASSY,
SO BRUISED WAS HIS HEAD,
HER THOUGHT, WHILE NOT CLASSY,
WAS, OH DARN, HE'S DEAD!

SO SHE BREATHED IN HIS MOUTH,
TO GET A REACTION,
AND DID, IN THE FORM OF
A GIANT ERECTION.

SUDDENLY, WARMTH CAME BACK TO HIS LIPS.
HIS HANDS STROKED HER BREASTS AND CRADLED HER HIPS.
HE NIBBLED HER NECK AND CARESSED HER FLAT BELLY.
HER NERVES GOT ALL TINGLY, HER KNEES TURNED TO JELLY.
SHE WAS STARTING TO WAVER, SHE FELT A WARM PANG,
BUT WAS SAVED BY THE BELL WHEN THE TELEPHONE RANG.
RRRRING!
WHO COULD BE CALLING AT SUCH A STRANGE TIME?
SURPRISE! IT WAS BATTBARTON'S VOICE ON THE LINE./
SORRY, ANNIE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOT INTO ME...
SHE SPOKE NOT A WORD, HER HEAD STARTED TO SWIM.
WHO HAD SHE BEEN KISSING? COULD IT REALLY BE HIM?
THEN LAYING A FINGER ASIDE OF HIS NOSE AND GIVING A NOD, UP THE CHIMNEY HE ROSE.
ANNIE THOUGHT, HE WAS SEXY, AND VIRILE, AND BOLD./
BUT THE REAL SANTA CLAUS IS A THOUSAND YEARS OLD!
THEN WE HEARD HIM EXCLAIM, FLYING NORTH TOWARD NIAGARA,
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL...AND THANK GOD FOR VIAGRA!
Merry Xmas
NOEL
END



Gore Vidal

america's eminent writer on corporate power, the decline of the kennedys and the erosion of rights

At 73, Gore Vidal is an esteemed author and provocateur. His novels include "Burr," "Lincoln," "1876," "Empire," "Washington, D.C.," "Hollywood" and, most recently, "The Smithsonian Institution." A collection of Vidal's essays, "United States: 1952–1992," won the National Book Award in 1993. A memoir, "Palimpsest," was published in 1995. His latest book, "The American Presidency," appeared this fall.

His grandfather was Thomas P. Gore, Oklahoma's first U.S. senator; his distant cousin is Vice President Al Gore. Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis was his stepsister.

Joseph Dumas coaxed Vidal to answer our questions from his villa on Italy's Amalfi coast. Dumas reports:

"He is everything attributed to him, and more."

1

PLAYBOY: Hillary Rodham Clinton visited you in Italy. You discussed the failed attempt at creating a national health service. What happened?

VIDAL: The health care proposals of the Clintons and the subsequent debacle show corporate America at its most vivid, protecting its turf and destroying anyone who tries to discipline it. Of course it was a conspiracy, though Hillary's phrase, "right wing," hardly defines it. I said to Hillary, "If you had made the insurance companies public enemy number one, the advantage—and perhaps victory—would have been the public's." She said, "We tried to be fair to everyone." Challenged by an attempt to bring the U.S. into the civilized world—all other first-world countries have national health programs—the insurance and the pharmaceutical companies, together with some high-spirited members of the American Medical Association, vowed that the U.S. will never have such a service. Why? A third of the costs for most health care under the present system goes to insurance companies for filling out forms and filling up their bank accounts, with not a Band-Aid for us. Then, just to make sure no other politician would try to give the American people anything for their tax money, they set out to destroy the Clintons personally with various lurid charges—necrophilia is in the wings—while taking endless legal actions against them, to bankrupt everyone. Those involved have now got the message: This is America. No one challenges the rich and their corporations. The only public money that can be spent for the public is for military procurement—that's how we've accumulated $5 trillion worth of debt. The Clintons were taught an expensive lesson about their humble place in society. Just another pair of lawyers in a government of lawyers for the benefit of lawyers. It is unlikely any president will ever again try to give the people anything for their tax money. Other than a war, of course.

2

PLAYBOY: Did you see *Primary Colors* and *Wag the Dog*? Were their releases serendipitous?

VIDAL: *Primary Colors*—the film is as funny as you might expect Nichols and May to be. The plot was taken from my play and later film, *The Best Man*. I noticed this at the time of the book but said nothing. I am often ripped off and I suppose it is a compliment. Mr. Anonymous took my plot: Will candidate use dirt on opponent and win or refuse and drop out? My character (Henry Fonda) did not. His (Travolta) did. *Wag the Dog* was farce—this is just guessing—when something a bit more realistic would have been a lot funnier and more harrowing.

3

PLAYBOY: Last spring, Senate GOP leaders were considering including tobacco tax revenue in the Medicare Trust Fund. Is this plausible?

VIDAL: Hardly. Helms, et al. need that tobacco money to pay for their elections. The original Clinton proposal would have been sufficient to place us among civilized nations such as Canada, Germany and so on. Reflex from corporate America: They are all going bankrupt because of the frills. Bullshit, of course. We rank something like 20 or 21 in *The Economist*'s quality-of-life survey. Denmark is number one. Everyone wants to come to America, howls corporate America, staring at the Rio Grande. No European does except to get cheap sex and drugs. We're a second-world nation as far as 80 percent of our people go. Twenty percent do wonderfully well, working for the one percent that owns most of the wealth.

4

PLAYBOY: Woodrow Wilson once said, "Secrets mean impropriety." Do you agree?

VIDAL: When anyone says to me, "Can you keep a secret?" I say, "Why should I, if you can't?"

5

PLAYBOY: You've said that Hillary Rodham Clinton would make a great president. Why?

VIDAL: Energy. Knowledge of issues. And I favored her health care proposal, the most important notion since FDR's Social Security Act of 1935.

6

PLAYBOY: Deborah Tannen laments that American society frames most public discourse in polarities. She writes: "Our spirits are corroded by living in an atmosphere of unrelenting contention—an argument culture. It rests on the assumption that opposition is the best way to get anything done: The best way to *(continued on page 186)*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GUIDO ARGENTINI

"This year I'm just giving everyone blubber!"

USING THE WEB

MONEY MATTERS BY CHRISTOPHER BYRON

One question I'm asked more than any other is: Can you really find all that stuff you write about just by searching the Web? To which I answer, yes, if you know where to look.

If you looked at financial data on the Web, you could have seen that Livent, the Toronto-based producer of live theatrical entertainment, was riddled with accounting problems that would cause its stock to crash. In the summer of 1998 it did crash, falling by nearly 50 percent in value on news that the company's board had suspended Livent's co-founder and vice chairman, Garth Drabinsky.

From Golden Books Family Entertainment to Planet Hollywood International, from Sunbeam to Individual Investor—the list goes on. Each was an overpriced stock with questionable-looking financials that anyone with a home computer and a telephone line could have investigated for himself. So this month we'll take a canter across the virtual landscape of investment research on the Internet and look for the best (and worst) financial research sites. The Yahoo search engine alone lists more than 5000 such sites. You can visit www.edgar-online.com, which provides a list of what it regards as the best sites. Or consider www.dowjones.com, which provides a directory that ranks hundreds of different sites by content, speed, navigation and design.

If you spend time on the Web you'll notice that nearly every financial-research site offers the same type of information—usually from the same suppliers. This leads us to Byron's first rule of Internet financial research: More than 90 percent of what's out there is plainly repetitive. Once you've found a decent—and comprehensive—site that's easy to navigate, stop looking for others because you'll be wasting your time. For example, the best known of the online brokerage firms—E-Trade Group (www.etrade.com)—entices Web surfers to sign up as clients by offering real-time quotes of stocks on the major exchanges, news from Reuters and the PR Newswire, as well as research information on individual companies. All this for free.

Yet virtually all this info is also available free from other Web sites. Much of the Baseline Financial Services data on companies actually comes from Hoover's Company Information. Hoover's supplies the same data to numerous investment Web sites, which make it available for free to anyone. You can find Hoover's data on CNN's Web site (www.cnnfn.com), at Wit Capital's Web site (www.witcapital.com) and plenty of other places. You can find Reuters newswire reports, keyed to industries and individual companies alike, at www.quote.com for a fee and at www.quicken.com for free. You can find free real-time stock quotes at Thomson Financial Services' Web site (www.rtq.thomsoninvest.net).

From my own searches on the Web, I recommend a site called Daily Stocks (www.dailystocks.com) as one-stop shopping. There are other sites that attempt the same thing, such as Tele-

scan's www.wallstreetcity.com. But Daily Stocks is in a class by itself. It doesn't have any fancied-up investment tools, just an exhaustive list of hot links to useful information on hundreds of different investment sites. For example, plenty of sites—but not all—carry daily information on the stocks that gained and lost the most on the New York Stock Exchange, the American Stock Exchange and Nasdaq. On the Daily Stocks home page there's a hot link to such a list maintained and updated daily, free of charge, by Data Broadcasting. Daily Stocks is a research index that weeds out the repetition. Which brings up Byron's second rule of Internet investment research: Once you eliminate redundancy, a lot of what's left is just plain wrong. An excellent site for an investor willing to do his own research is the Microsoft Investor site (www.investor.msn.com)—not least because of the sophisticated research tools available to subscribers for only $9.95 per month. These tools—which in the main are extremely easy to use—have been designed to be used with the research data available on the site. Unfortunately, an unsettling amount of the data on other sites is either tardy in being posted or just wrong. Most such problems arise because the sites use outside suppliers—so-called financial data vendors—to extract information from financial filings with the SEC. Then the vendors repackage the data into templates for subscribers. But not every company treats all accounting issues the same way. A depreciation item to one company may be an expense item to another. To make the data from thousands of companies fit neatly into templates, the data vendors routinely make lots of judgment calls about where a particular accounting item should be placed. My solution to that problem is to use the previously mentioned Web sites to zero in on a small number of stocks I want to look into—two or three is more than ample—then visit Free Edgar at www.freeedgar.com. This marvelous site provides up-to-the-minute data from almost every financial report filed with the SEC by virtually every publicly traded company in America. The SEC data are the basic building blocks of every financial report on the Web. Free Edgar lets you access the data in their original forms, exactly as filed with the SEC. The best feature of Free Edgar is a software button that allows you to download a table from a filing directly to an Excel spreadsheet. That means your computer can automatically compare the spreadsheet data with those of any company report you've downloaded from almost any other Web site.

Of course, you can avoid all this by simply putting your money in some mutual fund and letting the fund's managers do your research for you. But wait! How do you know which fund to invest in—and which fund managers will do the best and worst jobs with your money? Well, there are hundreds of sites to answer those questions, too. When it comes to investment research on the Web, there's just no end to it.

You can reach Christopher Byron by e-mail at cbscoop@aol.com.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARTIN MATJE

FIRE & ICE

the gold medal skater goes from 5.9 to a perfect 10

"At first I had the typical ice princess image," says Katarina Witt, who was clearly thawing by the time she skated her way to Olympic gold in 1988. Now, she's ready to take a blowtorch to any remaining icicles.

By KATARINA WITT

Even before this, our pictures of her have been vivid. First, there was the marvelously graceful teenager gliding across the ice, and winning the gold, at 1984's Winter Olympics in Sarajevo. Four years later, she did it again in Calgary. In 1994, she reclaimed her amateur status, defied the naysayers and finished seventh with a routine, set to "Where Have All the Flowers Gone," that mourned the destruction of the city where she'd competed a decade earlier. She won four world championships and an Emmy for the 1990 HBO special "Carmen on Ice." She received thousands of fan letters and marriage proposals before her 19th birthday; she turned down overtures from Eileen Ford, who saw in her a potential supermodel. "Sports Illustrated" once called her performance "the perfect blend of art and athletics, pirouettes and panache." She was so frequently dubbed the sexiest woman on skates that she could have retired the title. Now, at the age of 33 and with an appearance on "Arliss" and a role in the movie "Ronin" under her belt, Witt stands to add sexiest woman off skates to her list of honors.

When people ask me why I decided to pose for these photos, I sometimes kid around with them and say, "Because my boyfriend wanted erotic pictures." But that's just a joke. Basically, I have a very comfortable feeling about my body. We're much more open about nudity in Europe anyway, and in East Germany, where I grew up, there were nude beaches. I used to go to them—until, of course, people started to recognize me. They would see me on the beach, look at me and say, "Nice to meet you," but they wouldn't be looking at my face.

I've never done things the typical way, in my life or in my career. When I was an amateur, there was a time when my costumes started to be very controversial: People said the costumes were too sexy, too low-cut. But I think my costumes always supported my program, and helped bring out the purpose of the music, the choreography in the program. I hope I brought more passion to ice skating than most

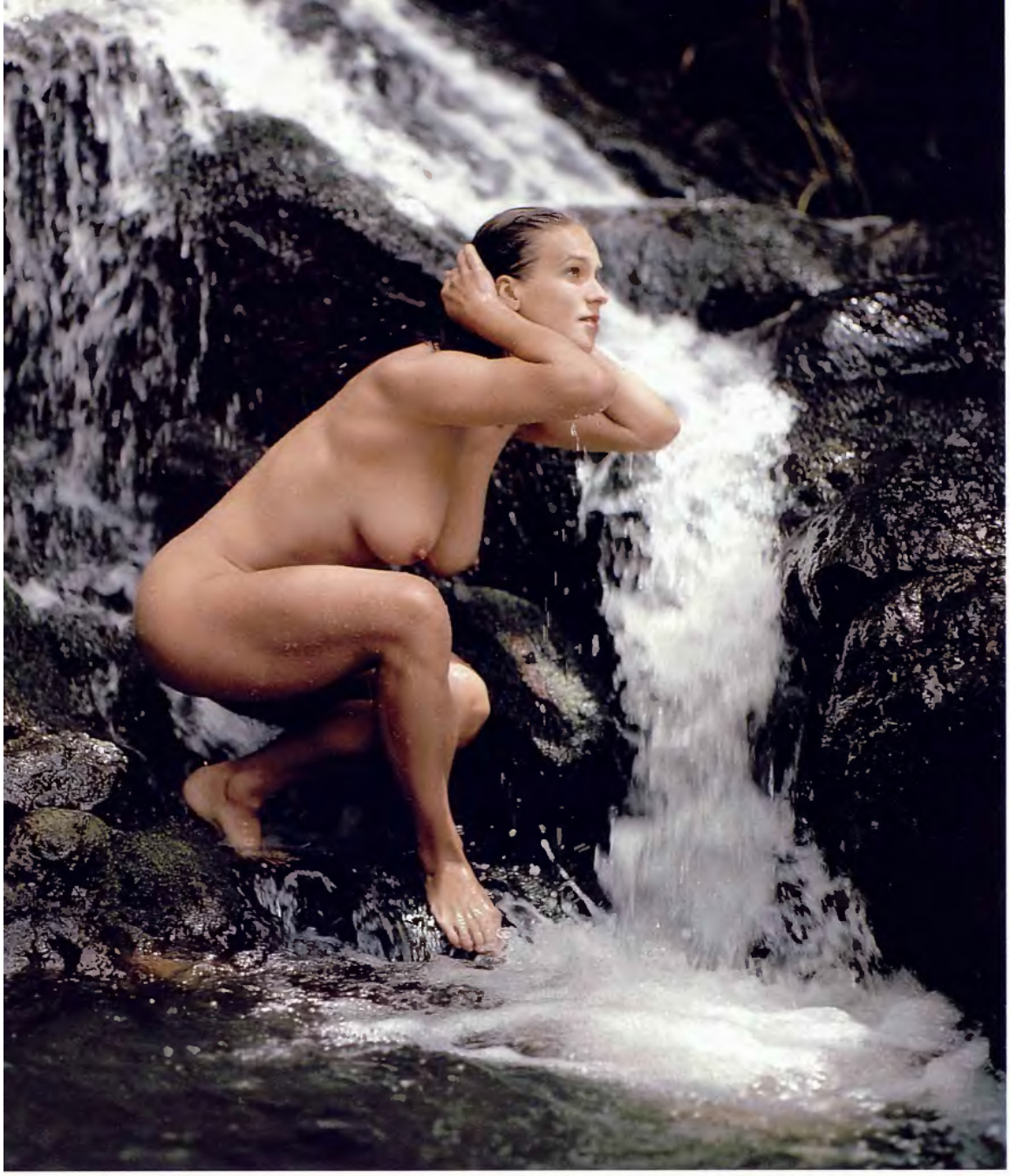
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LANCE STAEDLER

skaters, and maybe more sensuality as well.

I'm sure that some of my skating audience, when they hear I've taken off my clothes for PLAYBOY, will be shocked. They may be uncomfortable with it, or they might ask, "Why?" I don't know what to say, except that I was ready to do this. But I also think that once people see the photos, they'll feel differently. The pictures are beautiful and pure and natural. They're nude, but they still have a feeling of innocence. They're set in nature, in Hawaii, so it's appropriate that I'm naked, and I felt very relaxed. Every morning, for the three days we shot them, I would go see the stylist and ask, "What will I wear today?" And, of course, he'd say, "Nothing." That was our joke.

People always used to write about how I loved to flirt, and

HAIR AND MAKEUP BY ULLI SCHOBER FOR CELESTINE, LA
STYLING BY LEE MOORE FOR VISAGES, LA



I still do. Who doesn't? I've been thinking a lot about love and sex lately, especially after reading a controversial book about the writer Bertolt Brecht and his relationships with women. The author of the book, Sabine Kebir, advances a breathtaking thesis: For Brecht, sex wasn't just an end in itself or even the high spot of a relationship, but rather the beginning of a love affair. I like the idea that the bed is only a stopover on a journey toward love. Of course, this means that for centuries some couples have wondered why the symphony of love only burbles along, without highlights, without crescendos. It's no wonder if the accompanying music—sex—is made the central movement. There are times when the closeness, the physical attraction, brings men and women together. And, of course, the feeling of losing oneself in somebody's arms—yet at the same time finding oneself there—is irreplaceable. Nothing compares to the intensity of that feeling.

I said some of these same things when I wrote about the book in a German newspaper last year, and the article got a big reaction in my country. I suppose that now I'll get another big reaction all around the world, which is fine. I'm proud of these photos, but when I start to talk about them I sometimes have to laugh and ask, "Who cares what I think about them? It's time to see what other people think."

Are You Tired of Your Girlfriend?

By Gavin Edwards

save time, save money, save on shrink bills—take our quiz

Sometimes you know you're stone-cold in love. Other times you know you have to cut your losses, collect your toothbrush and head home. But what if you're not sure? Let this PLAYBOY quiz determine whether your girlfriend still lights your fire or if the relationship has run its course.

1. You've made dinner plans with her, but an hour before your date, a friend calls with Beastie Boys tickets. What do you do?

(a) Keep the dinner date.

(b) Leave a message on her answering machine, canceling dinner.

(c) Go to the concert only if you can get in touch with her first.

(d) Tell her you have to cancel dinner, then ask if you can stop by after the show for sex.

2. How many times have you heard her favorite joke?

(a) A few.

(b) Enough that you change the subject as soon as she starts telling it.

(c) Who cares? It's funny every time.

(d) You would rather gouge your eyeballs out with a rusty butter knife than listen to it again.

3. She likes to play James Taylor really loud at home. How do you cope?

(a) That's fine, you play Guns n' Roses at your place.

(b) Hide her compact discs behind the microwave.

(c) Turn down the volume a bit.

(d) Put her compact discs in the microwave.

4. How many times have you cheated on her?

(a) Once, but you regretted it.

(b) Never—but you plan to rectify that situation soon.

(c) Never—why screw up a good thing?

(d) Whenever she's not around.

5. She wants to go see *The English Patient II*, but the remastered *The Wild Bunch* is opening the same weekend. What's the plan at the multiplex?

(a) Two tickets for the chick flick.

(b) One ticket for each; you can meet afterward.

(c) Flip a coin.

(d) You're watching *The Wild Bunch*—she can do whatever she wants.

6. Whom do you fantasize about during sex?

(a) Sometimes Uma Thurman, sometimes nobody.

(b) Anybody from Miss September to the coat-check girl, just so long as you don't have to think about your girlfriend.

(c) Nobody—it distracts you from the moment.

(d) Your girlfriend's mother.

7. You have an anniversary coming up. What are your thoughts?

(a) I should make a reservation at a nice restaurant.

(b) I probably shouldn't break up with her until after the anniversary.

(c) I remember our first kiss.

(d) What's the cheapest gift I can get away with?

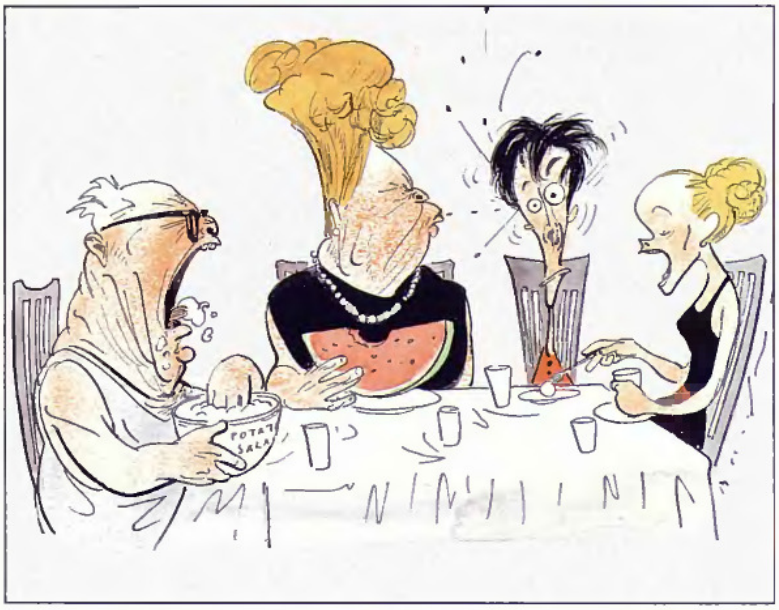
8. How often do you have an argument with her?

(a) Every three weeks.

(b) Three times a week.

(c) Every three months.

(d) Like MTV's broadcast schedule: 24 hours a day, every day.



9. You're invited to an orgy in a hotel room by Elle Macpherson, Scary Spice and Pamela Anderson. What do you do?

(a) Regretfully decline the offer.

(b) Join them, but only for an hour so your girlfriend won't become suspicious.

(c) Ask if you can take Polaroids instead of participating.

(d) Grab a taxi and leave your cell phone at home.

10. That funny noise she makes when she laughs—how do you

feel about it?

(a) It's certainly an endearing quirk.

(b) OK most of the time.

(c) It's no worse than your snoring.

(d) When the two of you go to a Jim Carrey movie, you want to sit seven rows away from her.

11. She has scheduled dinner with her parents the night you get back from an international business trip. What do you do?

(a) Pick up a bottle of duty-free schnapps for them at the airport.

(b) Take a quick shower and try not to yawn when her dad tells jokes.

(c) Tell her to reschedule the dinner so that you won't be jet-lagged when you want to make a good impression.

(d) Call her from the airport and tell her your plane was rerouted to Kansas City.

12. She asks you to marry her. Do you:

(a) Say no, but tell her perhaps someday.

(b) Need a week to think it over.

(c) Break up with her: She has a totally different idea of this relationship than you do.

(d) Say yes and make her an impromptu ring out of a twist tie.

13. You're in jail. Who do you make your phone call to?

(a) Her.

(b) Your best friend.

(c) Your lawyer.

(d) Anyone but her.

14. You have tickets to see your favorite team play in game two of the NBA finals on the same day that her college roommate is getting married. What do you do?

(a) Give the tickets to a friend.

(b) Go to the game.

(c) Go to the game, but send a really nice gift to the newlyweds.

(d) Feign illness the day of the wedding and go to the game once she's out of the house.

15. The new secretary at work has an awesome rack, and she's been flirting with you. You:

(a) Politely fend her off.

(b) See if your girlfriend has any interest in a ménage à trois.

(c) Flirt back, but don't take it any further.

(d) Lock the two of you in a supply closet during lunch.

16. She always forgets her wallet when you go out on dates. How do you handle it?

(a) No problem—it's your pleasure to treat.

(b) Grin and bear it.

(c) Discuss the issue with her.

(d) Make lots of long-distance calls when you're at her house.

17. Do you pick her up at the airport?

(a) Always.

(b) When it's raining.

(c) When you are able to get away from work.

(d) Never—if you do it once, she'll expect it every time.

18. She falls off a stepladder and twists her ankle. What do you do?

(a) Drive her to the emergency room right away.

(b) Have her elevate her foot and give her the TV's remote control.

(c) Give her some ice and a couple of aspirin.

(d) Tell her to stop the whining and walk it off.

19. You're in the shower when the phone rings. On the answering machine, you can hear it's your girlfriend. What do you do?

(a) Grab a towel and hustle for the phone.

(b) Call her back when you've finished rinsing.

(c) Listen to see if it sounds like it's really an emergency.

(d) Finish the shower and watch some television; if it's important, she'll call back.

20. If you won the lottery, would you stay with her?

(a) Yes—and you'd buy her a Porsche.

(b) Yes—unless she started hitting you up for loans.

(c) Yes—especially because she cared about you before the money.

(d) Not so long as there are young, impressionable catwalk models in the world.

SCORING:

For questions 1 through 8, score 3 points each time you answered (a) or (c), and 8 points each time you answered (b) or (d). For questions 10 through 20, score 1 point each time you answered (a), 5 points each time you answered (b) or (c), and 10 points each time you answered (d). For question 9, if you answered anything except (d), subtract 10 points from your score and slap yourself until you come to your senses.

25 to 75 points:

Not only are you not tired of your girlfriend, you're smitten with her. Enjoy it while it lasts! If you've been seeing her for more than a year, consider the possibility that this girl is the one.

76 to 125 points:

Welcome to real life. You can't be infatuated with someone forever. But as you know, even after a relationship's glow fades, there can be a lot of good reasons to stick around and make things work.

126 to 174 points:

You are not just tired of your girlfriend, you're exhausted. This isn't doing you any good, and it probably isn't doing her any good either. It's time to plot the great escape.

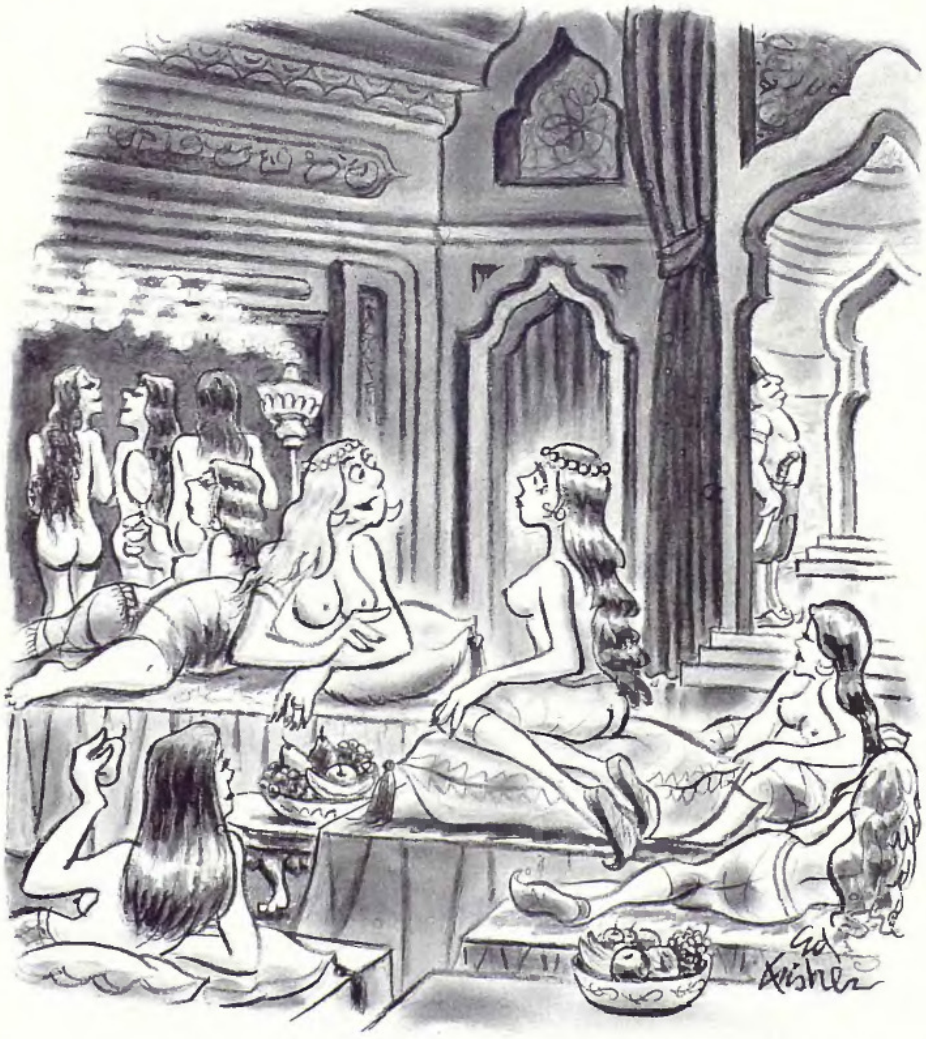
ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVE BRODNER

Gore Vidal *(continued from page 171)*

The Mob kills the person they think responsible for hassling them. It was Bobby they were after.

discuss an idea is to set up a debate; the best way to cover news is to find spokespeople who express the most extreme, polarized views and present them as both sides. Nearly everything is framed as a battle or game in which winning or losing is the main concern." Is that an exaggeration?

VIDAL: The adversarial mode is implicit in our laws from at least the Magna Carta on. It is an absurd legal system, with pretrial depositions that can range throughout the antagonists' entire lives with the fetish perjury—a matter of little or no importance in other systems—being a major weapon to destroy one or the other litigant. The American passion for adversary justice is at its worst in the metaphoric wars we wage against drugs and terrorism. Unfortunately it is rooted in our Constitution and was first brought into the dreadful light of day by Abraham Lincoln. He knew he had no legal power to free the slaves in the South, or anywhere else. He also had no particular wish to do so. He was interested in only one thing, preserving the Union and getting the seceded states back even if he had to kill every Southerner to do so. In this he was entering an uncharted wilderness. A good case can be made that any state has the right to go of its own free will, just as it freely joined the Union in the first place. This was what the Weaver family felt when they wanted to get away from a government they found hateful. They settled in the wilderness at Ruby Ridge, where the feds finally murdered a couple of them for daring to turn their backs on the land of the unfree. Lincoln was ingenious—a good lawyer, too. Because he couldn't quote the nation's scripture, the Constitution, to the effect that no state could ever leave the Union, he pounced on two concepts. First, his oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution. Defend meant with arms, if necessary. But there wasn't much else to go on when faced with secession, other than a presidential power in case of invasion or rebellion to fight by every means out of "military necessity." That phrase was the basis for the Civil War, in which over 600,000 young men were slaughtered. It was also, to be fair, the phrase used to free the slaves. So that is the background to Tannen's book. Ever since, in the name of a war of some sort, military necessity can be invoked and all the little children obliged to wear uniforms—tasteful brown, I suspect—and take Ritalin if they show signs of intelligence.



"I think you'll find that being the Sultan's favorite is one of those government jobs that's subject to term limits."

7

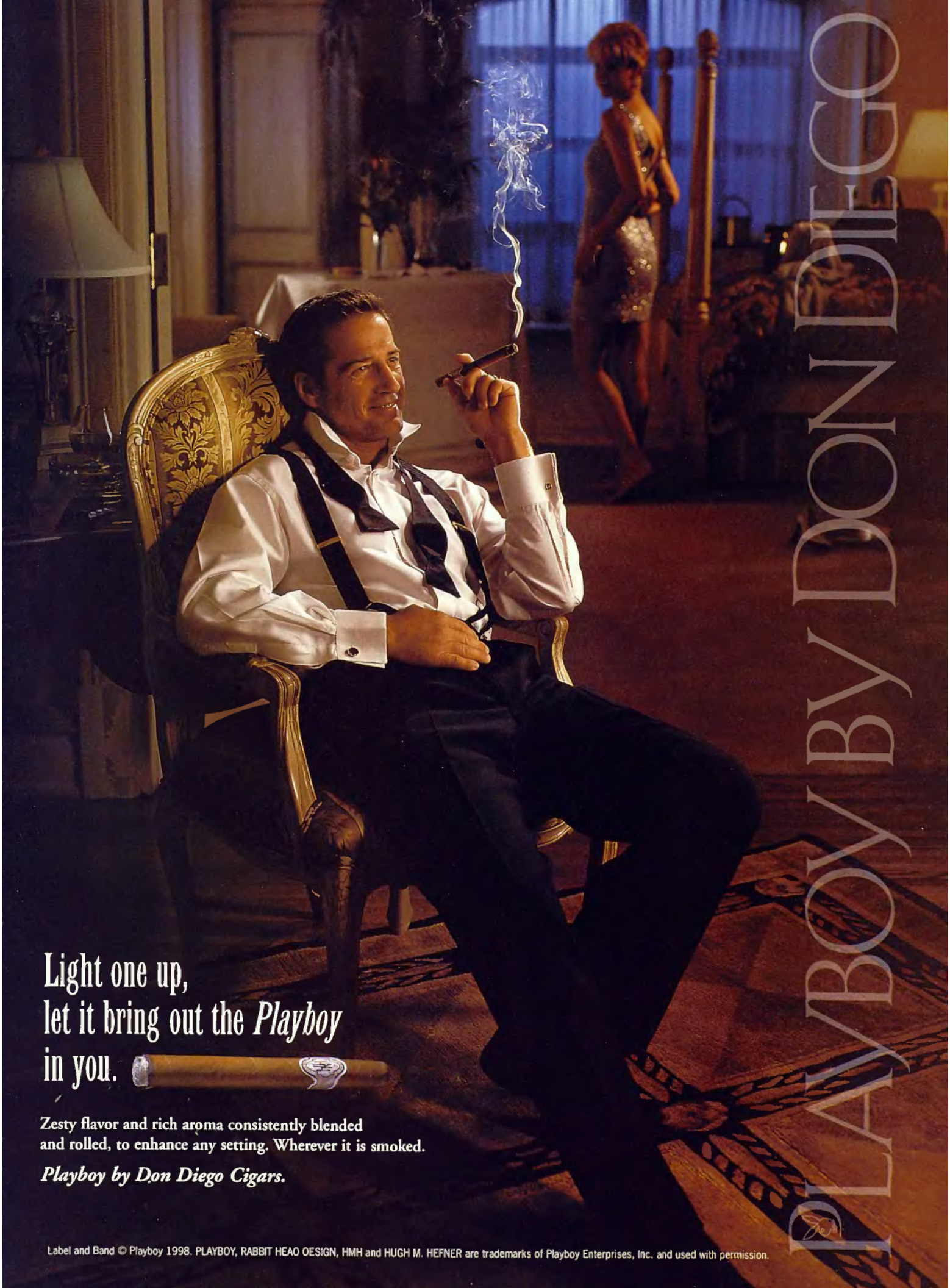
PLAYBOY: In New York City, the police department has come under fire for its methods in the war on drugs, especially unlawful searches. Does this concern you?

VIDAL: Certainly the police are running amok, and with the bland approval of the country's ownership, who have created two imaginary wars: one on terrorism, provoked by us internally, as at Ruby Ridge and Waco, and externally, as in Guatemala, Iran and Palestine. Naturally, the victims will try to blow up the odd building. The other war, the one against drugs, is a means to scrap the Fourth, Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments, which forbid unlawful searches and seizures without due process of law. Drugs should of course be legalized, but our government truly frets about our health and, though it will not give us health service or an educational system, nor maintain the Bill of Rights, it does want to preserve our health by putting as many millions of Americans as possible in prison or under surveillance. The police state is here. And the people are too cowed and misinformed to take back their rights.

8

PLAYBOY: What caused the dissolution of the younger Kennedy generation? Tragedy, or natural progression from lack of responsibility and privilege?

VIDAL: Children and grandchildren of men of power seldom pan out. They've seen up close the corruption of the system. Eleanor Roosevelt once said to me, "The Kennedys are so lucky that their children will still be so young when they leave the White House, as it is not the right sort of place to grow up in, with so much temptation."



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9

PLAYBOY: In a 1996 radio interview with Jerry Brown, the two of you spoke of the relationship between Frank Costello and Honey Fitz, and, later, Frank Costello and Joe Kennedy. What was the nature of those relationships?

VIDAL: Honey Fitz, as mayor of Boston, was in on bootleg whiskey from Canada, the numbers racket, prostitution, Mob stuff—so much so, the Mob sent him the young Frank Costello from New York. Later, when His Honor got himself elected to Congress to show daughter Rose the quality folk of D.C., a House committee gathered a several-thousand-page dossier on him and he resigned. Costello went to work for Fitz' son-in-law, Joe. During Jack's presidency, the two old hoods used to have dinner once a week with an old Teamster who gave them massages—this was on Central Park South. Within the family, it was always thought that Joe's stroke, shortly before Jack's murder, prevented Joe from stopping the Mob, through Costello, from killing Jack as revenge for Bobby's theatrics as the attorney general going after organized crime. The Mob had done so much through Sam Giancana to get Jack elected.

10

PLAYBOY: Does the Mob's anger at the Kennedys still exist?

VIDAL: The Mob is not mystical like the Kennedys, who hate whole families into the 30th generation. The Mob kills the person they think responsible for hassling them. It was Bobby they were after. As Marcello of the New Orleans Mob is reported to have said, "If a dog bothers you, you don't cut off his tail."

11

PLAYBOY: To you, the presidencies of Abraham Lincoln and Harry Truman were pivotal. Why?

VIDAL: Lincoln, like Bismarck at the same time in Germany, took a loosely federated nation with nothing much in common but a language and made a centralized (eventually militarized) federal state. Truman replaced the republic that Lincoln had thoughtfully left in place with a national security state, a militarized economy with bases on every continent. And he allowed our civil liberties to fade away. The first warning was when he required all government workers—several million people from Post Office workers up to Cabinet members—to swear loyalty oaths to the republic that was no more. Pure Stalin.

12

PLAYBOY: Bill Clinton has established the blow job as the Oval Office sex act of choice. What will be the other legacies of the Clinton presidency?

VIDAL: History won't pay much attention to Clinton other than to record—if the histories are not written in the boardrooms of the corporations which govern all our lives—that the presidency is, at home, an ornamental office. Only in foreign affairs can a president occasionally cause a mild disturbance.

13

PLAYBOY: A few years back, you narrated three 30-minute specials on the American presidency for London's Channel 4. Subsequently, U.S. rights to the series were purchased by the History Channel. Unlike the UK broadcasts, the U.S. broadcast contained a panel—which excluded you—to provide balance for your commentary. Why?

VIDAL: They hated the program. The History Channel was horrified by my frank discussion of how we obtained a global empire, because we are taught we don't go in for that sort of thing. Newsreels of Marines in Shanghai, on the Great Wall of China—in the interest of Standard Oil, I believe—blew empty minds. Everything court historians make certain we will never learn about in school was there on the screen, including Marine General Smedley Butler admitting that his role as head of the Marine Corps was as an enforcer for the empire. "Al Capone had only three districts," he said. "I had three continents." The History Channel is owned by, among others, General Electric, which used to provide us with expensive imperial weaponry as well as with Russians-are-coming propaganda from an actor whom they later, gratefully, retired to the White House.

14

PLAYBOY: According to *The Washington Post*, CIA Director George Tenet said the national intelligence budget this year totals $26.7 billion. Does that number surprise you?

VIDAL: Who will ever know the budget? The CIA, usually wrong on everything—most recently the nuclear explosions in Asia—should be dissolved. Intelligent countries use their state departments to find out what's going on politically in possibly rival lands and their defense departments to discover what other people are up to in the way of armaments and military mischief. The CIA was founded as an instrument to control our European allies, not to protect them against the Soviets. The first CIA caper was in April 1948, when they spent a fortune to keep the Communist Party in Italy from coming to power. Wherever democracy looks to be stirring they are there to kill it, as I saw firsthand in Guatemala and wrote about in my book *Dark Green, Bright Red*.

15

PLAYBOY: Does George Plimpton's oral history *Truman Capote* untangle the complicated Capote persona?

VIDAL: George finds Truman, the pathological liar, amusing. I found him repellent. Joyce Susskind once said Truman had caused more divorces than any other professional correspondent in New York.

16

PLAYBOY: The notion of campaign finance reform. What happened?

VIDAL: Nothing happened and, probably, nothing will. No burglar, once he has got to the second floor, ever kicks away his ladder. Under the present system

"Did you really think I climbed over snowy rooftops and down a filthy chimney just to fill your stocking . . . ?"

everyone who matters benefits, except the American people. Wealthy corporations elect their lawyers to high offices while the media, specifically TV, make hundreds of millions of dollars selling time for ads. An act of Congress could limit elections to eight weeks and forbid anyone to buy time on TV and radio where free time would be given nationally for national candidates (presidents, that is) and locally for local candidates. This is what civilized nations do, but God forbid we join their ranks.

17

PLAYBOY: In 1963 Senator Mike Mansfield was to have delivered a speech the day JFK was killed. Grief-stricken, he canceled. This past spring, Mansfield, now 95, was invited to address the Senate leadership in the Old Senate Chamber in the U.S. Capitol. He chose to dust off the 1963 address. In essence, his themes called for a kinder Senate, one of democratic debates (as opposed to monologs in an empty chamber) and leadership, especially at times of social change. Is this fantasy?

VIDAL: Fantasy now. How many senators can give an extempore speech? In my grandfather's time they knew a great deal of history—Latin and Greek, as well. They took themselves seriously as tribunes of the people, as voices for the unseen and unheard. Of course, there were crooks then, too, but they at least had a Dickensian sense of theater. They dressed up and spoke up. The Senate was the best show in town. Now, displaced anchorpersons who never made it to prime time toss their air-blown locks or, more sinister, their bouffant wigs to the breeze from the air-conditioning that keeps the television lights from overheating their thin blood. It's to weep.

18

PLAYBOY: Do you believe Social Security is safe? If not, what do you recommend to fix it?

VIDAL: The talk that it will be bankrupt—pick any year within the next ten—is wishful thinking based on greed. Mutual funds, brokers, bankers, etc. are desperate to get their hands on the fund. To privatize, which means, in this case, to rob. Contrary to the misinformation, it is a mildly profitable trust fund. Contrary to the federal deceit, Social Security's income and outgo are not part of the federal government's revenues or disbursements. But they are always counted as such. Why? Because including Social Security funds and disbursements makes the 90 percent that was once spent on war seem smaller than it actually is. This is a nice trick. Of course, to be blunt, the government has already stolen all the money in Social Security for Star Wars, etc. and replaced it with IOUs called Treasury bonds. I suppose one day these will have a curiosity value, like the notes of the old Confederacy.

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19

PLAYBOY: What advice do you have for Al Gore?

VIDAL: I would advise him to ask himself why on earth he should be president, for he has no plans other than a vague commitment to the environment, which everyone has, including the polluters who pay for him and the others. Alas, his response to Why him? would be Why them? No one who can be elected president—who is able to raise $100 million—will be of the slightest use to the country. They are paid to work for the good of corporate America. Only systemic reform—eight-week elections, free time on TV, as civilized countries have—can restore representative government.

20

PLAYBOY: Does the purchase of Random House by the German conglomerate Bertelsmann bode well?

VIDAL: Nothing can be worse than the way Random House has been run for the last decade. So let's try the Germans. Famous last words, no doubt.

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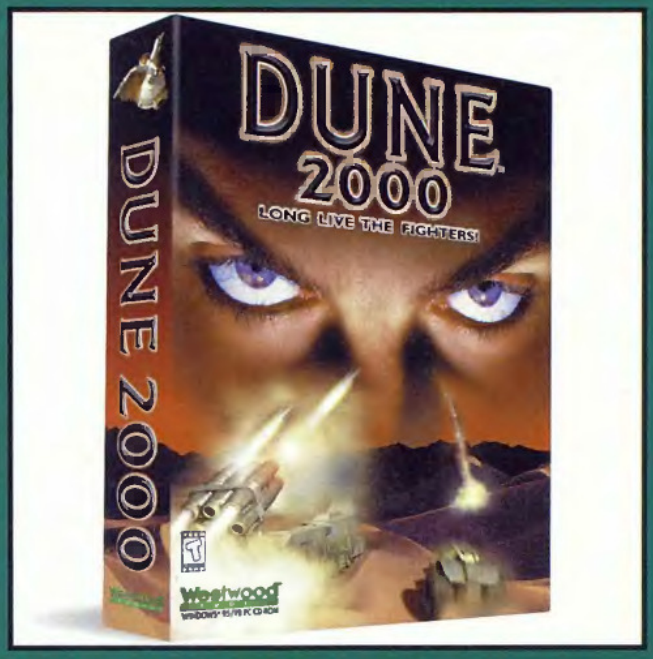

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WORKOUT

(*continued from page 104*)

and the Seattle Mariners' power-hitting shortstop Alex Rodriguez.

Your goal may be as simple as a certain number of repetitions or making fewer unforced errors than in the last racquetball match. But Grover promises your training results will zoom if you set a definite target.

SMART THINKING 1: Current exercise research shows that the brain is a terrible thing to waste during a workout. Athletes who think about the muscles being worked develop their physiques faster, stronger and bigger than control groups who let their minds wander.

Grover admits it can be difficult—maybe even boring—to think about your muscles constantly during workouts. He recommends that you consider the muscles with each new lift or stretch and remind yourself every few minutes. Make a commitment to concentrate on muscles worked during at least one session per week.

BE FREE: "Weight machines are good for beginners and for top athletes getting into peak shape," says Grover. "Machines can help strengthen injured areas, such as a cranky lower back, without risk. But I suggest that everyone use free weights whenever possible."

Free weights work more muscles, especially stabilizer muscles that you use every day, whether you're moving furniture or negotiating moguls on a double-diamond run.

"Weight machines isolate muscles," says Grover. "You can throw your body out of alignment with too much work on certain muscles in the upper body or legs. Free weights minimize that risk and encourage good posture and better balance."

IT AIN'T ABOUT HEAVY: Grover says that only competition bodybuilders should lift heavy weights. The rest of us would do ourselves a favor by cutting our current weight amounts in half, then doing more repetitions with proper form.

Once you master technique, set goals to lift a certain number of reps in an appointed amount of time rather than increasing the weight. After you reach the time goals, then increase the weight. This plan encourages quickness and body control.

SURPRISE YOURSELF: Muscles are highly proficient at adapting to physical demands. That's why many fitness enthusiasts hit a plateau in cardiovascular conditioning or strength.

Grover says to keep your body guessing. Change your routine every month. If you usually run first, and then lift weights, switch it around. Do lower-body work first, then the upper body. Change hand positions on your lifts. Try a new exercise class. Play a different sport.

Rather than ride the same bike at the health club, use another model. Better yet, try another piece of equipment. Use the random setting frequently, because that adds an element of physiological surprise.

SMART THINKING 2: "Nobody works out for three hours," says Grover. "There's usually a lot of socializing involved." Rather than waste the time, exercise intelligently. Forget the small talk and dedicate your time to moving. Don't wait for a machine, use another one. See how far you can go on a bike in ten minutes, then hop on a rower for another ten. Grover suggests half an hour in the cardio room. Use three different machines at matching intensity and don't take a break. If the weight room is packed, do some floor work—abdominal crunches, push-ups, single-leg hops, jumping jacks, pull-ups or chin-ups.

CHANGE OF PACE: One of Grover's secrets is interval training. Devote one workout each week to short-track work, doing those wind sprints you hated back in high school. Also sprint through your weight routine—while maintaining perfect form—for tremendous results in performance.

The key lies in pushing yourself far enough to exhaust muscles while maintaining correct technique. Rest long enough between exercises to stay in form, but continue to challenge yourself.

TOP THREE MISTAKES AT THE HEALTH CLUB:

(1) Not taking a full stride on stair climbers because you want to go faster, or leaning on railings.

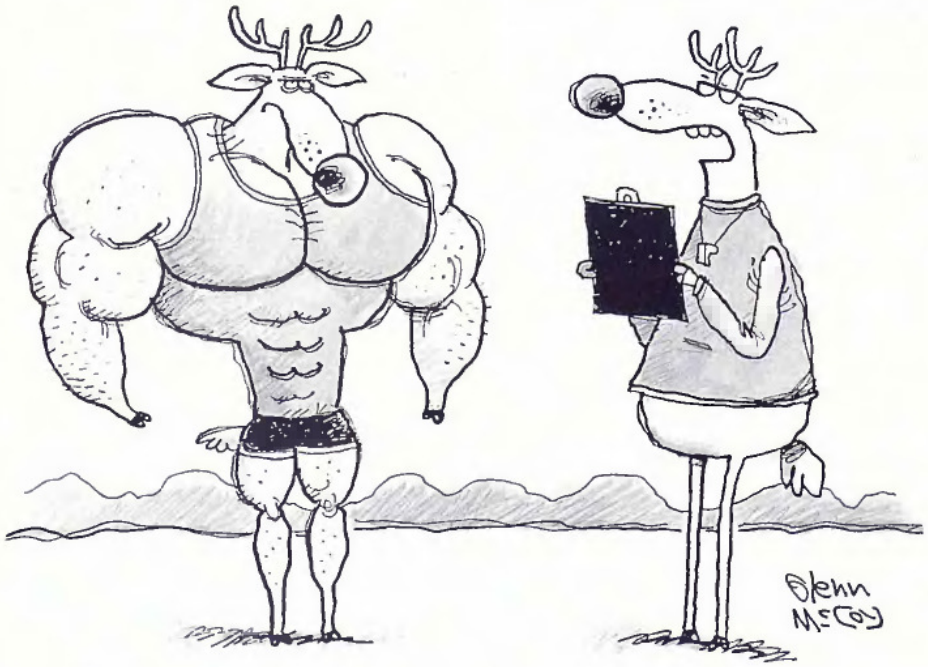
(2) Going too heavy on weights, especially in the early weeks of a program (men). Lifting too light, particularly after you gain experience (women).

(3) Doing abdominal crunches improperly. You should be able to do only 20 to 30; if you are doing 100 or even 50, you're not doing them effectively.

A quick lesson from Grover: Come up high enough to lift your shoulder blades completely off the floor, then back down until they barely touch. You want to feel the contraction in the entire ab wall, moving from top to bottom. Think about your abs as you do the crunches. Keep your elbows out and follow three stages with your hands, going to the next level of difficulty when you have mastered each: hands out at sides; hands crossed in front of you; hands behind your head but not clasped nor pulling on your head and neck. Rather than doing more reps, increase resistance with light dumbbells or weight discs held in the hands.

PROBABLY THE BIGGEST MISTAKE: "People finish working out and then order pizza and beer or a Cobb salad and a martini at the club restaurant," says Grover. "I've seen people doing the same thing for years. They think they've earned it, but it cancels out what they just accomplished."

Grover doesn't begrudge you an occasional foodfest—just don't make it a habit. Instead, he recommends sports drinks, protein shakes, energy bars or fruit after a workout. Wait at least an hour before eating a meal—this lets your brain reset its hunger gauge—and then favor low-fat carbs and protein to satisfy cravings from the recently fired muscle fibers.



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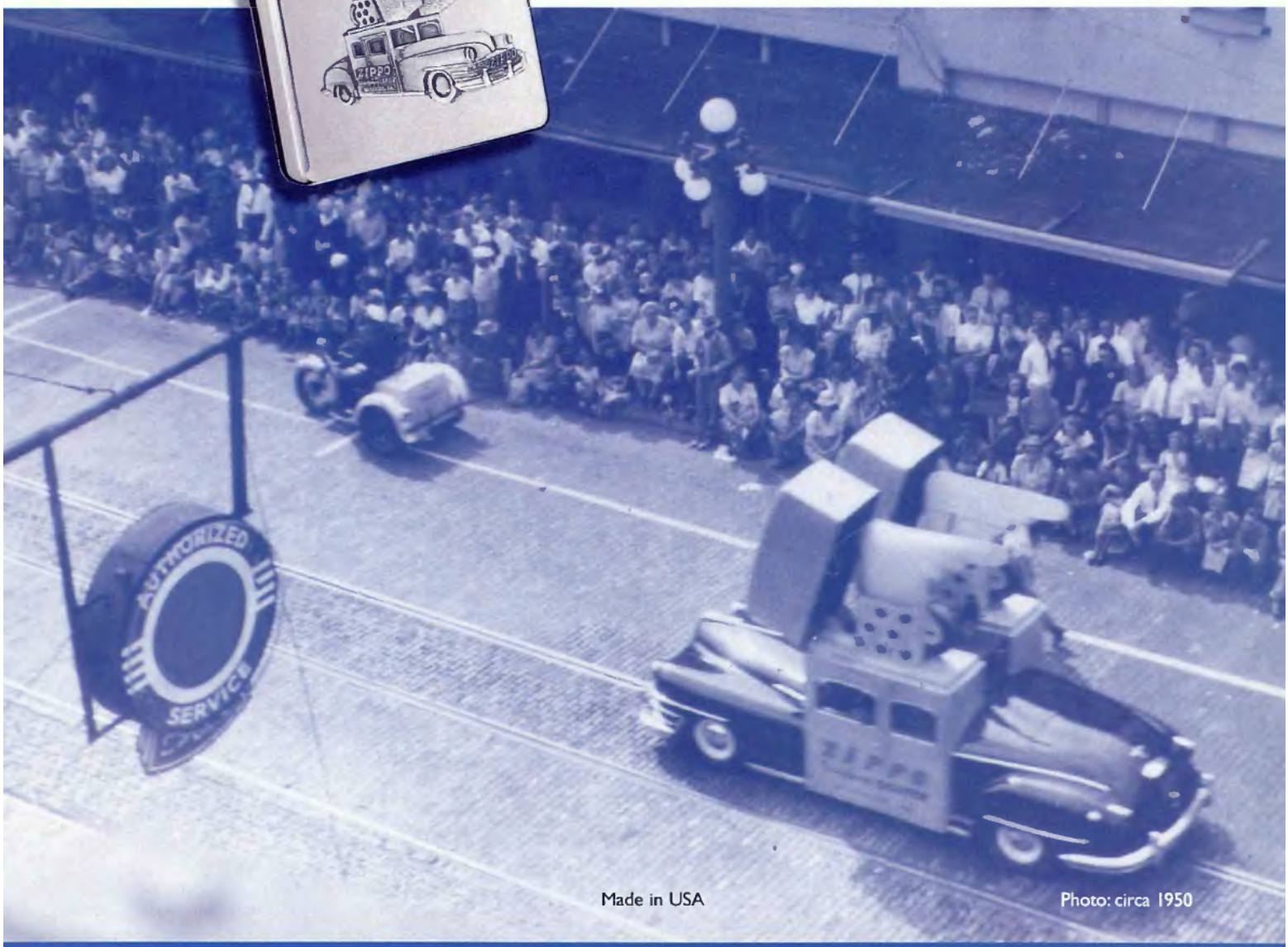

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SECRETS WE KEEP

(continued from page 102)

the room]: "Do you think she's attractive?"

HE: "She doesn't even exist for me." (Translation: And I only wish to God she did.)

There is clearly no need for confession and full disclosure if whatever you're being accused of took place out of sight—and out of town.

But what happens when there is the equivalent of DNA evidence of your reckless behavior—when you've been caught with your hand in the sexual cookie jar? Even here, you might want to think twice about confessing.

A stockbroker friend has an odd marriage. He lives and works in Boston, his wife is in Los Angeles. Each year she visits him for two weeks, bringing along the children, then returns to the West Coast. When I asked him about the unusual arrangement, he said she had once caught him in bed with his assistant and has been punishing him for 20 years. And they're still together. I suggested that in some corridor of himself, he wanted to be caught, had arranged to be caught. No one who doesn't want to be caught has to be caught. This insight did not particularly impress him, though he didn't deny it. His mistake was that, when caught in the act, he did not immediately invoke what has come to be known as the Richard Pryor defense: "Who are you going to believe? Me? Or your own lying eyes?"

When attempting to make a case for secrets in love and marriage, it has to be pointed out that there can never be any real secrets between two intelligent, caring, well-matched and well-attuned lovers. The slightest shift of a glance, an alteration in speech pattern, a change of any kind, including body temperature, is enough to throw up a flag.

Yet another friend of mine was insanely in love with his wife and would not, on threat of death or dismemberment, have caused her a second's worth of pain or discomfort. But one night, during an out-of-town trip, he had a drink with a colleague and found himself unfathomably drawn to her to the point that he felt he was in danger of falling madly in love. Nothing came of it. He took her to her hotel room and kissed her goodnight—then returned to his own quarters, unable to stop thinking about her and racked with both guilt and desire. Still, he made a heroic effort to put this woman out of his mind—and he thought he had succeeded.

When he returned home the following day, prepared to be greeted by his wife with warmth and enthusiasm, he felt he was the picture of innocence.

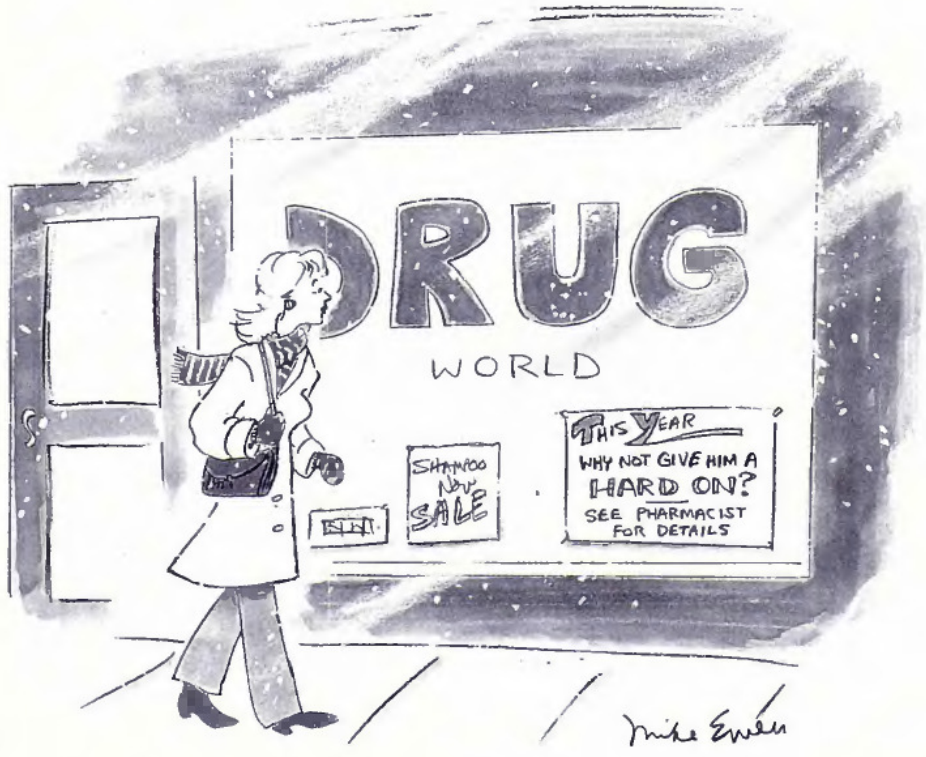
Yet the moment he walked in, his wife fell upon him, beating his chest in a panic and saying, "What happened? Something happened. For God's sake, tell me what it was."

"Nothing happened," he said. "Absolutely nothing happened."

But he saw that his denial was not going to fly, so he told her about his brief and relatively innocent encounter.

"But how did you know?" he asked when they both had calmed down.

"That," she said with a shy smile, "is *my* secret."



LOST SCENE

(continued from page 149)

you, she puts a finger to her lips, opens her . . . this is gonna sound crazy . . . opens her fucking dress, not a word out of her mouth, and displays the two most perfect tits I've ever seen. [*Beat*] Not coming over, abuse of any kind, weird shit of that bent, but she holds these boobs up for me to look at, as I'm going, "Huh?"

The CO-WORKER *is alert at this, looking skeptically at* CHAD, *who has the hint of a smile on his lips. Silence.* CHAD *doesn't hesitate as he glances over only briefly.*

CHAD *(continued)*

I know, I know, but what am I gonna do, right? My own mother, for Christ's sake! This little smile on her face. And I falter, I do, but goddamn if I can't find it in me to keep on. . . . [*Beat*] I'm watching her—not a flicker of movement, her nipples hardening, only slightly—and fuck, I come, I'm serious, I nearly hit the window eight feet away, just the two of us staring at each other. After, I lay back, breath all gone and the shame starting up, and you know, I check Mom, out of the corner of my eye, but she's already buttoned up. She whispers to me, "You rest now." And off she goes. Don't see her anymore that afternoon. [*Beat*] Imagine that, huh? And I'll tell you, I've puzzled over it, mused the hell out of the meaning of the gesture, but nothing. No idea. But I'm sure of at least one thing. Doesn't matter who I'm with, rest of my days, I don't ever expect to see a set of jugs like those. And that scares me a little. It does.

This is too much. The CO-WORKER *can't help but laugh and* CHAD *joins right in, just two young men relaxing in the water and having a good old giggle.*

CHAD *(continued)*

Anyway, I do remember this—and I always found it kind of significant. She made me, my mom did, my favorite meal that night for dinner. Big roast, bunch of potatoes. A Bundt cake, I think. And Dad's sitting there across from me, no clue whatsoever as he tries to keep up with Monty Hall in the next room. . . . [*Beat*] So was it wrong? Some Oedipal shit I'll pay for in the end? Maybe so, I don't know, but we must talk on the phone two, three times a week and I still get a Whitman Sampler off her every holiday, so I guess it didn't do that much damage . . . right?

CHAD *doesn't wait for a reply but instead buries his head under the cool surface of the pool. He shakes his hair like a hound and then pushes off past his* CO-WORKER, *disappearing with long strokes into the humidity and haze of the dimly lit room.*

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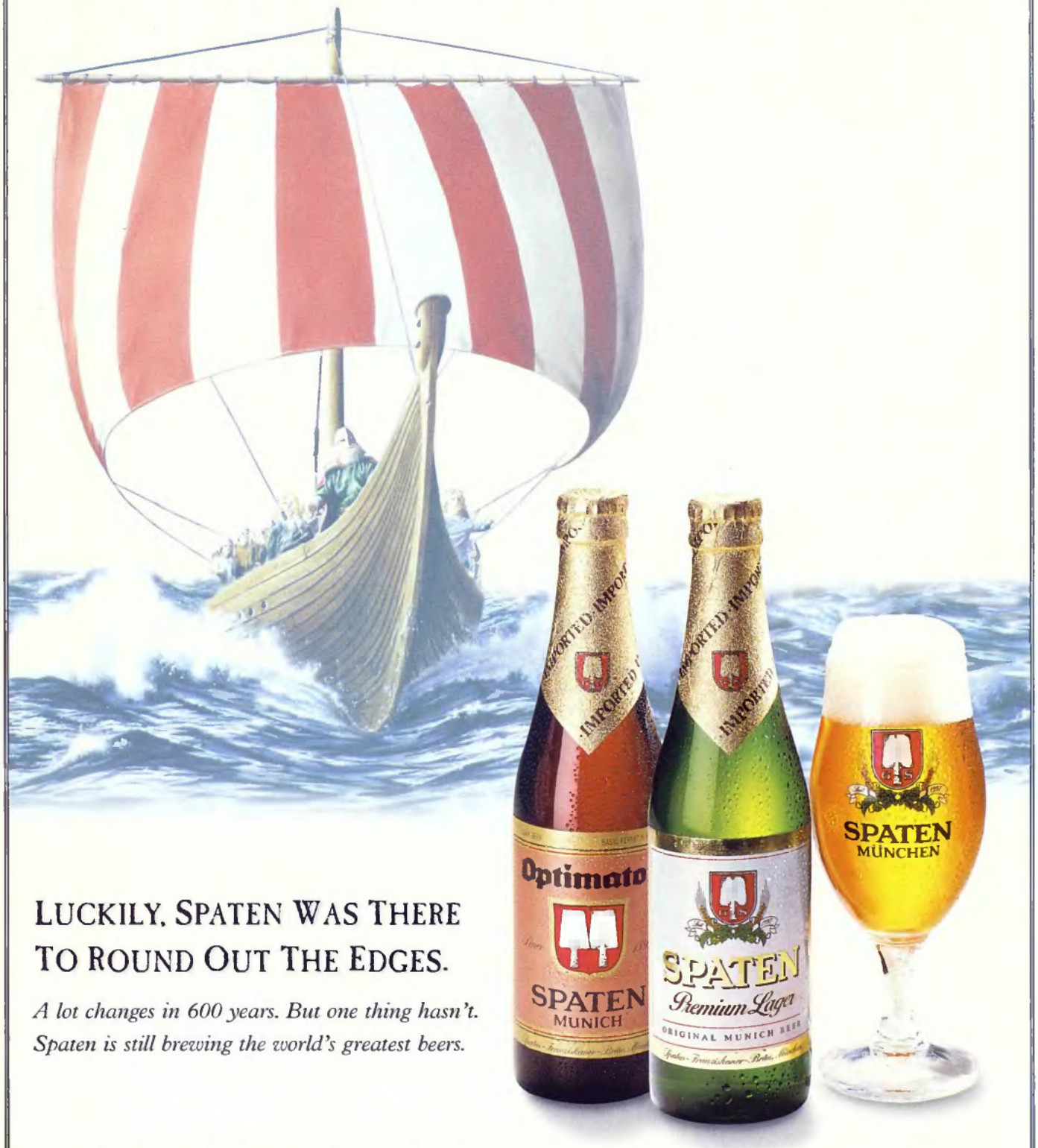

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(continued from page 116)

east in a strong following wind, surfing down the face of high quartering seas and pulled along by Big Red. This was our biggest spinnaker, a blimp of a sail not much smaller than Belgium, someone said, though it was in fact about a quarter of an acre. Big Red cost $37,000 and came fresh from the sailmaker's loft the day before we left New York. This monster was our secret weapon, the heaviest cannon in *Adela*'s arsenal. If we could keep Big Red full of wind we'd have the race and Charlie Barr's record in the bag.

Adix was gone from view but far from forgotten. What did they have that we didn't know about? And why did they leave the dock late one night when we were still in New York and return just before daybreak? Nobody goes sailing for fun after dark when they could be out drinking, as normal sailors do when they're about to race across an ocean.

We suspected that *Adix* went out that night to test new and even bigger sails than ours, and though we plied her crew with enough liquor to loosen the tightest lips, it was a mystery that remained unsolved. Perhaps she would suddenly reappear in our wake, storming along under a monstrous sail that blotted out the sky and made Big Red look like a postage stamp. But if this did come to pass, we could only hope it would be in darkness so we'd be spared the shame of having to watch. Failing that, surely it was not too much to ask that when she overtook us our rival's sails would burst into flames and all three of her masts fall down.

Again I sought an opinion from Shag.

"Never mind them bastards," he said. "What we ought to do is go south. We should have gone south two days ago. That's where the wind is."

Go south? More wind? We already had more wind than we knew what to do with. That's why we'd reduced sail, putting two reefs each in the mainsail and the foresail. Why go south when we were charging downhill at 14-plus knots? Multiply speed by 24 and you've got 336 miles a day—at that rate we could cut two days off Charlie Barr's record!

Shag's fellow hired guns, including two other round-the-world veterans, disagreed about the southern option. By the time we'd been at sea a few days there was so much disagreement on this and other tactical theories that for a while it looked as though the debate would end with a punch-up in the scuppers—or so it was said by those who were there; I was up forward in the net under the bowsprit, looking up into the billowing heart of Big Red. Dolphins were showing off on either side of the bow, sun on the water, the steady rumble and

WHERE & HOW TO BUY

Below is a list of retailers and manufacturers you can contact for information on where to find this month's merchandise. To buy the apparel and equipment shown on pages 32, 45, 47, 104, 109–113, 128, 228 and 231, check the listings below to find the stores nearest you.

WIRED

Page 32: "Sega": "The Next Generation": **Game system** by *Sega*, 800-733-7288. "Virtual Disney": **Entertainment complex** by *Walt Disney Co.*, Orlando, FL, 407-828-4600. "Wild Things": **CD changer** by *Pioneer Electronics (USA) Inc.*, 800-746-6337.

MANTRACK

Page 45: "The Ultimate Computer Desk": **Computer desk and chair** by *I.D/Design*, 888-302-3375. Page 47: "Guys Are Talking About . . .": **Pocket Mail** by *JVC*, 800-252-5722. **Life Hammer** from Herrington, 800-622-5221. "Want Sex? Stuff Her Stocking": **Lingerie** from Enchanté, 900 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, 312-951-7290. **Phone** by *Motorola*, 800-331-6456. **Video series** from Good Vibrations, 800-289-8423. **Camera** by *Fuji*, 800-800-FUJI. **Hitachi Magic Wand** from Good Vibrations, 800-289-8423. **Goose** by catalog from D'Artagnan, 973-344-0565.

WORK OUT LIKE MIKE

Page 104: *Attack Athletics*, 300 N. State St., Chicago, 312-644-2403.

PLAYBOY'S CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

Page 109: "Go Ahead—Be Extravagant": **Cigar humidor** by *Tommy Bahama*, 800-647-8688. **Cognac** by *Pierre Ferrand*, at various retail stores nationwide. Page 110: **Leather chart case** by *Willis & Geiger*, 800-223-1408. **Color Watchman** by *Sony Electronics*, 800-222-7669. **Minidisc player and recorder** by *Sharp Electronics*, 800-237-4277. **Multimode telephone** by *Kyocera*, 888-474-3486. Page 111: **Watch** by *TAG Heuer*, 800-321-4832. Page 112: **Answering machine** by *Bang & Olufsen*, 800-323-0378. **Coffee and espresso maker** by *Capresso*, 800-767-3554. Page 113: **Limited-edition motorcycle** by *Playboy Enterprises* and *Titan Motorcycle Co. of America*, Phoenix, 602-861-6977.

THREE'S COMPANY

Page 128: **Sauna** by *Baltic Leisure Sauna*, 800-441-7147.

PLAYMATE NEWS

Page 228: **Video Centerfold: Playmate of the Year Karen McDougal and 1999 Video Playmate Calendar** from Playboy Catalog, 800-423-9494, www.playboy.com/catalog.

ON THE SCENE

Page 231: "Stocking Stuffers": **Pocketknife** by *Spyderco*, 800-525-7770. **Duck call** by *BGB*, from Mark's Prairie Wings, 800-229-0296. **Golf scoring watch** by *Aztex Sport Watches*, 800-558-4836, ext. 75. **Cognac flask** by *A. Hardy USA*, Wilmette, IL, 847-698-9860. **Camera** by *Minolta*, 800-528-4767. **Personal computer** by *Philips*, 888-367-8356. **Cologne** by *Coty*, at drugstores and mass retail outlets nationwide.

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hiss of scattering foam.

That night the ship's horn jerked the off-watch out of our bunks soon after we had gone below. One long, strident blast penetrating into the bowels of the boat, followed by a voice shouting down the hatch, "Everybody on deck *now*!"

Swines! It was the other watch taking their revenge. Yesterday, just as they went below, we got them up to help raise Big Red. But we didn't use the horn. They used the horn! This was going too far under the accepted rules of inter-watch needling. The horn ploy could only mean that Captain Carson, the archneedler, was at the wheel, gloating inwardly while pretending to be sorry for waking us.

Cursing him, cursing the other watch and the boat, we stumbled about in the main saloon looking for thermal gear, flashlights, harnesses, socks, hats, gloves, boots and oilskins. To prevent confusion these had all been numbered before the race, but now it seemed the thieving bastards on watch had willy-nilly helped themselves to whatever came to hand first and left the rest of the stuff in a sodden, jumbled heap.

The horn again. More angry yelling down the hatch.

We had no idea what was happening up there. Fire? Imminent collision? Man overboard? Who could tell? Feet thundering overhead, more shouting, deck canting one way, then the other, both masts vibrating, the hollow twang of rigging under strain.

As we scrambled into our gear someone called out—for about the tenth time since the race began—"Taxi!" We cursed him too and arrived on deck just in time to see the shredded remains of Big Red disappearing in a silky fluttering rustle under the light of a blazing full moon.

"Thank you for joining us, gentlemen," Carson said, grinning broadly, as he often does when he wants to hit someone. "Maybe next time you could make it on deck within the hour, if you would be so kind."

How the other watch managed to lose our biggest sail, what happened and who was responsible, nobody would or could say. It was dark, we changed course, perhaps someone failed to take up enough slack in a line or took too much, perhaps someone gave an order that was misunderstood. Operator error. Not that it mattered now. Big Red was a goner after only 12 hours of service or, to put it another way, at a cost of around $3000 an hour.

All that work for nothing.

•

Eventually we would blow out seven sails, including both spinnakers, which had to be cut away and abandoned. The other five we managed to save and repair. For 22 hours we dropped the heaviest sail on the boat—the mainsail, which provides the driving power—to replace a torn panel. This work had to be done on deck by hand because the main weighed half a ton and was too thick to be carried below. So much for the electric sewing machine installed in the sail repair room in the saloon. Sailmaker Graham Knight sat on the deckhouse roof and stitched until he couldn't see straight while the rest of us kept an eye on the fogbound horizon, expecting *Adix* with each passing minute.

While Graham sewed we were lucky with the wind, which stayed behind and gave us days of fast, effortless sailing. With all sails up again we made 299 miles in one day and celebrated with a beer apiece, convinced that we'd won the trophy for the best day's run—and would have won if *Adix* hadn't clocked up an extra fraction on the same day.

Two days later the wind turned hard against us in the form of square-shaped onrushing seas, spray-flecked gray boomers exploding over the bow while *Adela* lunged into the troughs with all the grace of a drunkard falling down the stairs. From then on we slept with faces jammed against the bulkhead or pressed against leeboards, the lashed-up canvas cloths that keep you in the bunk when the boat's heeling on her ear; and with each lift of the bow we braced ourselves for the crash at the bottom of the next canyon and wondered whether this time we would fall on a whale, a submerged container or some other unseen boat sinker. Those of us who bunked forward had the full benefit of this experience while our pampered shipmates, the hotshots and the owner's party, slept aft in the splendor of guest cabins.

Adam, the owner's son, came aboard with a retinue of can-do young executives in the New York real estate and money markets who arrived at the dock in their three-piece suits shouting, "Ahoy, mates!" to *Adela*'s stone-faced regulars. At the last minute one Wall Street recruit showed up with Miss Fabulous on his arm and explained that he couldn't make it—he was in the middle of a deal. Sorry. That left us a man short and with no chance of finding a replacement before the race. Thus at first we were not disposed to think too highly of these new arrivals.

Some of them had never before sailed offshore and during the first week spent their hours on watch bundled up and greenish. This was understandable, we'd all been there once, though it was a little unusual to find them huddled in the deckhouse, wearing every lifesaving device available while they conferred on the downstream dollar possibilities of this or that particular deal and the projected earnings and losses of another.

Carson rousted them out of their shelter one morning while they were peering out of the deckhouse, admiring a dolphin racing alongside the boat. "Get your asses on deck!" he shouted. "This ain't a sight-seeing trip—we're racing!"

•

At least once daily *Adela*'s owner called from New York on the $12-a-minute satcom line to discuss tactics with Captain Carson. Some days he called more than once. Did we realize that *Adix* was making better time than we were? Did we have any plans to increase our speed? Were we aware that another boat, a big, fast, modern ketch owned by a Saudi tycoon, was creeping out of the pack and closing in on us?

There were urgent consultations between Carson and the afterguard of experts. What to do about *Adix* before she did it to us? Everyone had ideas. We sent a man up the foremast to look, but

"Sure beats visions of sugarplums, eh, Pops?"

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he could barely make out the horizon through the driving rain. We could have called them on the satcom line, pretending we were from the media and asking them for their position, course and speed. Carson ruled that out as nonkosher. A third option was to radio *Adix* and identify ourselves, offer to give them our position in exchange for theirs and then plead radio interference and hang up when it was our turn to deliver. To this, Carson shouted, "Maybe you'd like to call in an air strike and sink 'em!" To that someone murmured, "Can that be arranged?"

Damage had already taken its toll in the fleet. In the rising seas the venerable schooner *Aello* lost a topmast and had a 30-foot crack down her mainmast. Just as *Aello*'s skipper was about to send five men out onto the bowsprit to lower sail, the bowsprit snapped off and was carried away. *Aello* was out of the race. *Globana*, a 118-foot ketch with a crew from the U.S. Naval Academy, ran into a fishing net and limped off to the Azores with a tangle of rope and wire around the keel. She was out, too. And another vintage schooner, *Mariette*, dropped out when the owner fired his race tactician and replaced him with a man who navigated the boat into a windless void. This, combined with the fact that the boat ran out of food, so incensed *Mariette*'s owner that we later heard he punched the cook on the nose and sulked in his cabin until the boat reached England under engine power.

All told, six of 15 boats retired. Two of the dropouts, *Sapphire* and the schooner *America*, had been chartered by the upper crust of England's yachting fraternity, the Royal Yacht Squadron. In New York before the start, the senior RYS member aboard *Sapphire* threw a wobbly because the captain of *America* failed to dip his ensign in salute. Now both RYS boats were quitting in midrace, not because of damage but because their distinguished charterers had suddenly remembered they had important business ashore, and would have to proceed under sail and engine. In defense of these fine gentlemen, it must be said that members of the RYS wear spiffy little hats and awfully tight reefer jackets as part of the squadron uniform; however, nobody would mistake them for sailors.

The calls from *Adela*'s owner increased. One day he called with orders to tack. This was a novel and in my experience unprecedented command, for it is generally recognized that a decision to change the boat's direction is best left to the people actually on the boat rather than to someone a couple thousand miles away. But tack we did and after an hour or so of sailing toward a point way south on the Moroccan coast we tacked back in the general direction of Europe. Someone asked Captain Carson if we could hook the owner's telephonic voice into the deck hailers next time he called so that he could shout, "Ready about!" and other useful commands at the opportune moment. Carson, who was now smoking half a carton or more daily, was in no mood to reply.

We had by then been going to weather—pounding into the wind—for several days. This is called beating. *Adela* lay on her ear, smashing through the seas with one side of the deck awash, the other lashed by frigid spray. To get anywhere you staggered, crawled, jumped and slithered, holding on to whatever you could grab before launching yourself forward. The beating came into it when you crash-landed on a steel winch or head-butted some other fixed object, like a mast.

•

We were no longer worried about the whereabouts of the rest of the fleet; we had enough to do maintaining maximum possible speed through the rising seas, pushing the boat to the limit, raising and dropping sails to squeeze what we could out of the wind.

The warmth of the Gulf Stream, fanning out to the north and east almost to the edge of the icy Labrador Current, was far astern. No more shorts and T-shirts. Now it was—in the obscure parlance of sailors and contrary to the theme of the movie of that name—the full monty: seaboots, gloves, hats and oilskins, all except for Shag Morton, who drew the line at boots and stood every watch in big, bare, calloused feet.

Halfway through the second week we ran out of cocoa, marmalade, jam, candy and cookies. Tempers in the crew mess

"I'd like to see some ID."

shortened as this horrible news sunk in. People wanted to know who ate the last Milky Way. The guilty—I and seven others—said nothing. Our position was this: They finished off the cookies.

In the early days we feasted on ribs and steaks, chicken and beef pies, spicy pizzas, tuna melts and other treats. Now there were sarcastic gripes from the nonsailors about the frequency of beans and porridge in the ship's diet. *Adela*'s cook, a strapping young lady called Carey Gordon-Jones, runs a sailor's bar and restaurant in Antigua and for several months in the Australian tropics cooked for a shipload of psycho biker-shrimpers strung out on speed. Ignorant of the golden rule that applies to cooks at sea—never, ever piss off the cook—perhaps the nonsailors on *Adela* saw Carey as a domestic servant and failed to notice the glint in her eye when they chanted, "Oh boy, beans again, just what we wanted." Someone less tolerant would have dropped something nasty into the saucepan. Carey went on deck and smoked a couple of cigarettes until her temper cooled.

•

Having stripped the boat of surplus weight before the race, we had only one video on board, an action movie starring Steven Seagal. In one scene a busty half-naked girl springs out of a cake. Man of Steel meets Woman of Silicone—we never tired of watching the cake scene.

Further entertainment was provided by Adam, who, as a Yale Law School graduate, had an endless stock of probing questions:

"Why is it windy?"

"Why are the sails making that awful noise?"

"Why is it raining?"

"Why are we going up and down like this?"

And, most difficult of all, "Why are we here and not somewhere else?"

Who could say? But it was clear that after days of pounding against the wind, fatigue and frustration had set in. A 20-minute sail change now took an hour or more. We still couldn't make the course we wanted: We could sail above it and below it, but not on it. *Adix* was reported to be drawing ever closer, parallel with us though still slightly behind, and the phone rang day and night with calls from the owner. Adam dropped a few hints that if we didn't win, Captain Carson might have to look for another job. Carson took that in his stride and changed the subject. "You could be right," he said, "but think of the money you're saving your clients by not being there to advise them."

Belowdecks, the electrics went on the fritz: lights shorting out, alarms sounding to report leaks fore and aft, generators overheating—all false alarms, as it

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turned out, though our one and only electric kettle sprang a leak and gave violent shocks to anyone careless enough to make contact. Engineer James Harrison dealt with each problem as it arose and waited moodily for the next crisis.

For 750 nautical miles we stayed on the same tack, four days of hard beating through rain and low gray scudding clouds. Around the clock the bowsprit crew raised and dropped headsails while the rest of us crowded forward to drag the sails over the rail and onto the deck as they came down. The bowsprit crew spent much of their time underwater with the boat heaving and plunging under them. Once they took a 30-foot drop that tossed 12 men skyward until they were jerked back by their harnesses and half-drowned on the way down. They escaped with a few chipped teeth, sore ribs, a black eye and bruises.

And then, toward the end of the second week, the wind eased and the sun came out. We shook out the reefs in the mainsail and the foresail, hoisted our last remaining headsails and took off like the proverbial bat. The next day the wind came back in strength, forcing us again to reduce sail. But the sun stayed and the drying decks steamed in its warmth.

Thirteen days after racing across the line at Sandy Hook we saw contrails heading east. Overnight traffic from the U.S. and Canada. Later in the morning two Royal Navy helicopters clattered over the horizon and stationed themselves on each side for an hour or so as we plunged onward past the Isles of Scilly toward the English coast.

With 50 miles left to the finish someone asked Carson if it was time to put the champagne on ice. *Adela*'s captain, who cannot tolerate the color green, whistling or the word rabbit—all considered bad luck by mariners—shook his head. The Saudi yacht was still gaining, had even drawn ahead of *Adix*—or had she? Nobody knew for certain.

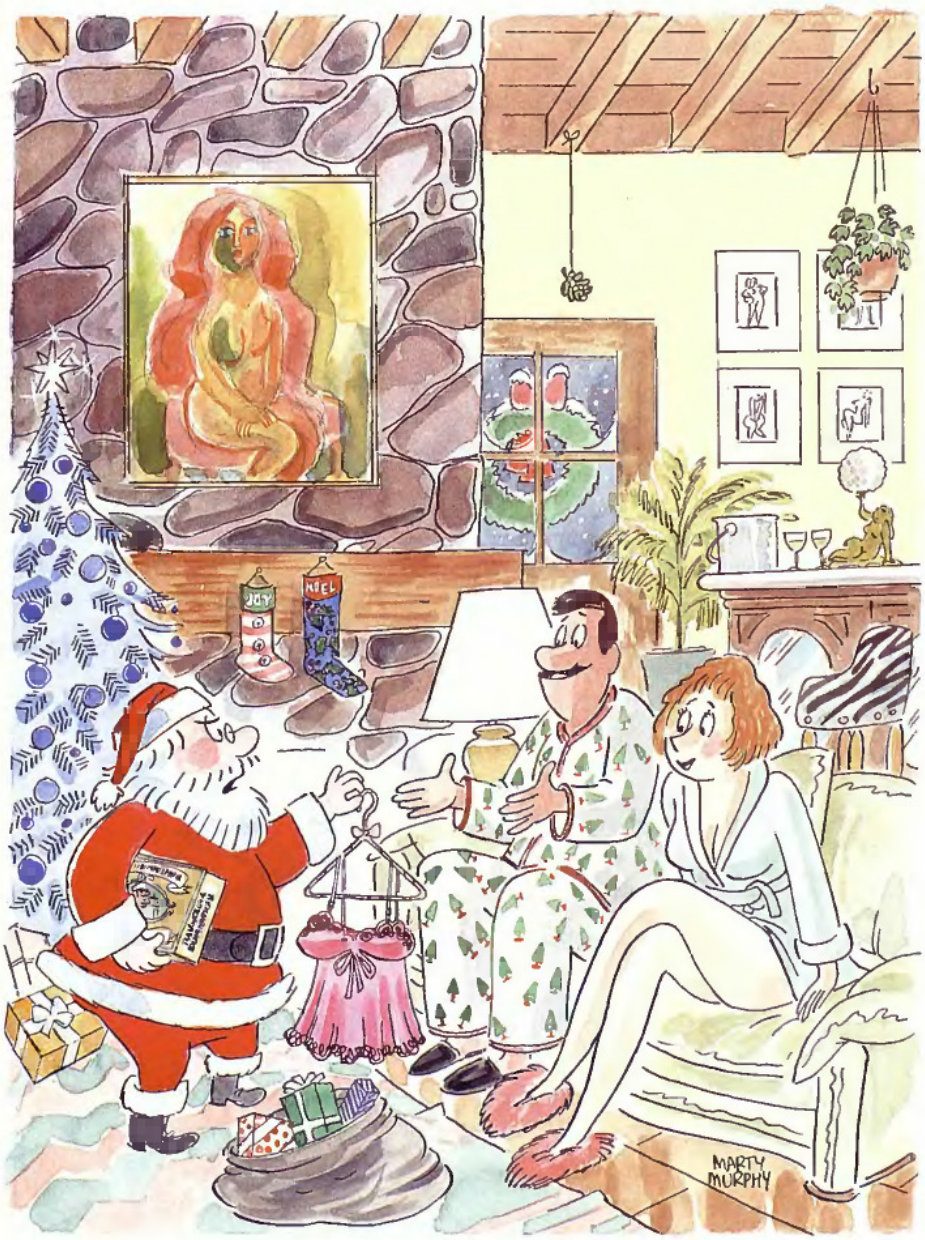
What mattered was that anything could go wrong in the last stretch, with the boat and crew pushed way beyond tolerance. Both masts could go over the side, the stitched panel in the repaired mainsail could give way under the strain, some fool might bounce over the side, forcing us to turn around and pick him up. Carson himself, now reaching the last of his Marlboro Lights, might go crazy from nicotine starvation and set a course for the Pacific.

We sailed on, counting down the miles until we saw the long range of sunlit cliffs that mark the southwesterly tip of England. There was a puff of smoke and the faint thud of a cannon as we passed Lizard Point and crossed the finish line. We answered with two rounds from *Adela*'s cannon and for the first time in two weeks felt the strain and stress fall away. Out came the champagne. People embraced, shook hands, cheered and laughed—some wandered off, not trusting themselves to speak in case emotion overwhelmed the elation.

At the dock we found wives, girlfriends, families, TV news crews. And *Adela*'s owner, who couldn't stop grinning and shaking hands with everyone he saw. If it bothered him that he'd laid out maybe a quarter of a million dollars to win first prize—a Rolex and a couple of bronze and glass trophies—he showed no sign of it.

No, we didn't smash the record that Charlie Barr set in 1905. His time beat ours by a day and 17 hours, and as much as we might wish otherwise, I can't help feeling glad that Charlie's record is still standing. (Many boats have turned in faster transatlantic times than Charlie Barr's, but not while racing in a fleet of full displacement yachts; later record breakers had the luxury of waiting for just the right weather—a strong westerly front—while our fleet had to leave on the appointed date, wind or no wind.)

For all the good they did us we could have pulled the plugs on *Adela*'s computers and the rest of the electronic arsenal. In racing a boat across an ocean, it always comes down to the basics: You can do only what the wind and sea will let you do. We won the old-fashioned way, Charlie's way, through dogged hard work and refusing to quit and because in the end the crew—all of the crew, including the first-timers—gave everything they had and kept pushing it. There's something to be said for that. Shag Morton said it afterward in the pub: "Fuck losing."



"Now let's get this straight . . . the silk lingerie's for you, and the lady gets the Havanas?"

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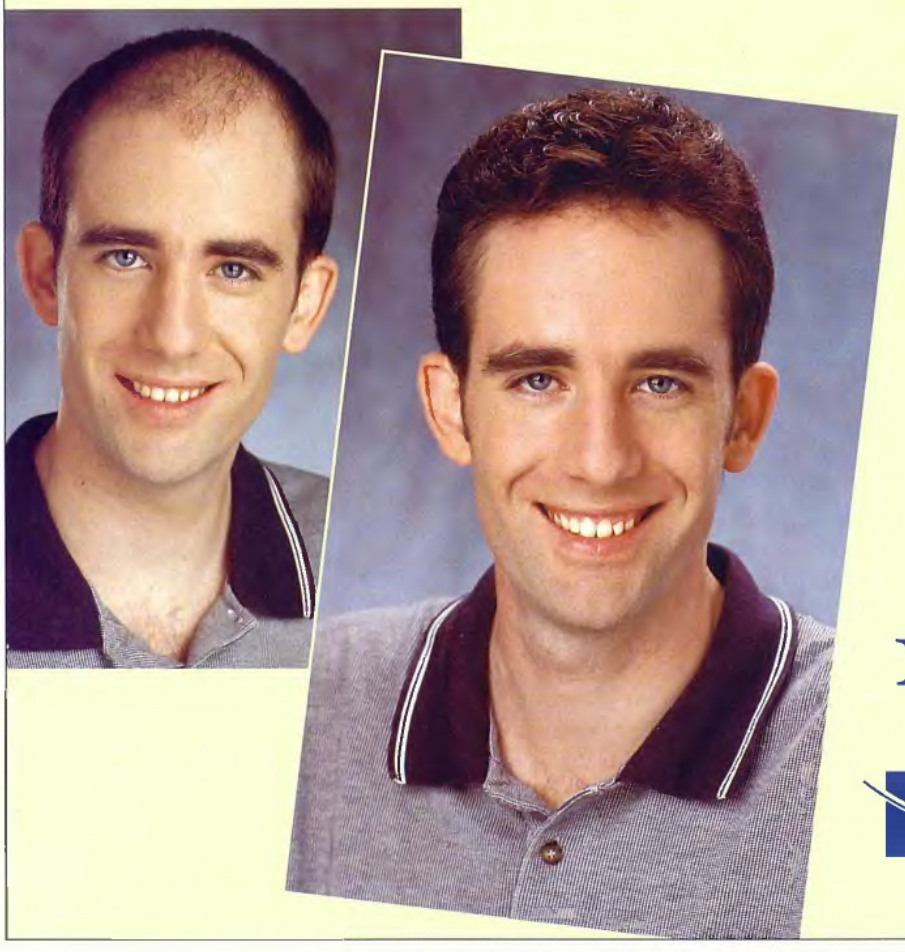

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Ancient Mariner

(continued from page 166)

shots now, but I'll get back with you as soon as my dick allows it.

See, it was like Ronnie Harper was an appendage of his dick instead of the other way around. Like Marcia Ziegler had the world's most powerful damn electromagnet, like one of those junkyard babies can pick up a tractor-trailer and haul it across the lot, like she had one of those megawatt electromagnets right yango between her legs. And Ronnie Harper's dick just bypassed his higher function, drug him around after, Ronnie bouncing along behind going Whoa shit Marie, waving his arms for balance, like he's just hanging on to a towline and his dick the towline and Marcia Ziegler's privates a speedboat with an Evinrude 120 on it and Ronnie not so good a skier. It was like his penis——

Do you mind if I use the word penis?

It was like his penis—well hell, you might even know what it's like yourself, you're about that age. Lots of guys when they get up toward 40, it's like their penis turns around and looks up and says, Hang on, hoss, you and me're taking one last ride before I pack it in for good. And it's off to the races. This was not about *liking* Marcia Ziegler. Are you kidding me? When you got a wife like Alice at home? This was a penis job, boy. Nothing but a damn penis job.

Now I—thank you. Sure will. Thank you.

Now I haven't told you about Alice. This is where the story gets tragic. You might wanna think about having another drink here yourself.

Now Alice, she is a good woman. More than a good woman, a special woman. If Marcia is all sidelong angles and a bony little ass, then Alice is direct and straight and, you know, more womanly in her physique. You should've seen her in the little sundress she was in when she stabbed Ronnie. Very sweet. Blonde girl. Freckles on her chest. And the tops of her arms there. Oh, you can see her in the little girls. Two blonde little moptops. And how she doted on them. Positively doted. Man, you have not seen doting till you've seen Alice with her kids. Well, Ronnie too, far as that goes. You could not fault him there.

But Alice is like that with everyone. Loves people. Puts 'em at ease, right away, 'cause the minute you meet her you know you don't gotta watch your back. You're with friends. You're not with a salesman—though I ain't saying it wasn't genuine with Ronnie, the friendliness. Hell, Ronnie liked people plenty, until his dick up and threw a shadow over it. But with Alice there was never any of that ambition shit mixed in. Just good feeling.

So what's a woman like that gonna do? Say, OK, hell with my marriage, it didn't work out, I'll just start dating again? Yes, Joe Bob, this *is* a lovely chard'nay? Alice Harper? I don't think so, good buddy. This woman is too good for dates. Your Marcia Ziegler, your Marcia Ziegler, *she* dates. You take a Marcia Ziegler——

But this might be the time, here—maybe I should introduce a personal note. A little confession. Because, stranger, what'd I say before? Talking about Marcia Ziegler? Said I knew her to say hello? Well that's a half-truth there. Let me tell you something. I did not go all over town blabbing how I was a fornicator with Marcia Ziegler myself. Some of us just don't do that. We set back in the shadows a little bit, we're a little recessed. Laying back, there, in a covert fashion. Don't gotta tell the damn world, but yes, I had known the lady myself. More than to say hello to. And let me tell you something. You want to know what it's like having sex with Marcia Ziegler you should do this: Go to the paint store——

Any paint store. It doesn't even matter which damn paint store. There's a Sherwin-Williams over on Bowie.

Go to the paint store. Go in there, pull your pecker out, strap it into one of those paint shakers they got there and dial that baby up to ten, or whatever the highest is. Jackhammer, whatever. San Francisco, 1906. And while you're at it have one of the paint salesmen put his mouth right next to your ear and shriek, "Fuck me Whatever-the-Fuck-Your-Name-Is! Fuck me Whatever-the-Fuck-Your-Name-Is!"

Nussbaum, huh? Hmm. We don't got a lot of Nussbaums around here.

Well, anyway. Now you don't gotta sleep with Marcia Ziegler.

Very intense lady.

And did I mention, Nussbaum, that regardless of when you have your orgasm, you gotta leave your dick in that paint shaker for a good quarter hour?

OK. Where was I?

So this is going on and it's common knowledge. So they're having fights at home, Ronnie and Alice, and finally Alice insists that the two of them go to The Healing Center.

The Healing Center, that's this ranch facility on the Guadalupe, over in the hill country, they have seminars and also one-on-one things, for personal growth. Also have wine tastings in the evening. So they're at The Healing Center for about a week. And Ronnie gets back, comes right into the bar, sits on his stool—that one you're sitting on—and orders a beer. And he has a black eye the size of a plum.

So I just go ahead and play stupid. I say, How was it, Ronnie? How was The Healing Center?

And he looks down at his beer kind of shifty-eyed, and his arm stretching forward makes his leather jacket ride up past his chin, he nods down at his beer and says, Not bad. Nice place. Spectacular setting.

And everyone comes into the bar looks at him and asks him how was it and he nods and says, Spectacular setting.

And he looks like a man under sentence of death, the strain still there in his eyes. Because he was a prisoner. The man was a prisoner of sex.

Thank you. No, maybe I'll switch to a Bombay martini here. Red Dog back. Thank you.

But I was telling you about Alice. This is a good woman. This is a woman—how

"Hey! Merry Christmas, everybody!"

do I describe it. When you go to the store to buy a cantaloupe and you want to see if it's ripe, you heft it and give it a little thump, and if it sounds nice and plunky then you know it's a good goddamn cantaloupe. Well that's Alice's ass. Not that Alice had a fat ass—not at all. No, it was just right, made you want to thunk a knuckle against it to hear that perfect sound. Not like Marcia Ziegler's scrawny little ass.

And having sex with Alice was like swimming on the sweet rolling sea. Like the tide pulling you in. Bringing you safely home. Not like Marcia Ziegler, yanking you home like a bad dog. Where you run a danger of whiplash. I swear, sex with Marcia Ziegler, it feels like she's got wires crossed in her ass. And her orgasm is like a pinball machine ringing up your 800,000 bonus points. Chinka-chinka-chinka-THWOCK-chinka-THWOCK—you know what I'm saying. And then she'll just lie there a moment to catch her breath and then go "Huh!" Just "Huh!"—like the bonus ball burping up.

But Alice—with Alice, it's smooth and sweet and free. Because she's a *woman*, Nussbaum, y'understand. Wrapping you up and holding you with her love, but giving herself, sharing, sharing cries of joy, Nussbaum, that are almost unbelievable, like in a church pew, a goddamn *pew*, Nussbaum, or when you gaze upon some scenic beauty so goddamn fresh and high it is almost beyond your power to take in. Your heart can't take any more, it must give forth, it must share its joy with her, so that her heart will pound with the same joy, the joy she draws from *your* pounding heart. It is that kind of deep, *deep* giving and loving and sucking and fucking and fucking and sucking and sucking and fucking. And afterward, not that damn business-like "Huh!" Afterward—weeping.

And sweetness. *Bitter*sweetness, Nussbaum. Dripping, weeping, sighs. I am not a weeping man, Nussbaum. But the *world* weeps. You lie there and the world is a great weeping bayou, and Alice and you are on this bed, which is now a pirogue floating off into the twilight as a distant bird cries——

A boat, Nussbaum. A pirogue is a kind of boat.

No, it's not clammy. I'm not talking about the goddamn sheets being wet. The dripping is not a literal thing. It's a feeling. Jesus Christ, you got a goddamn narrow little mind there, Nussbaum, I don't care how many drinks you buy. I'm talking about people's souls, and you're talking about jizz dripping on the sheets. Grow up, man. Show a little maturity. Jesus Christ.

Yeah, OK. That's OK. Yeah, forget it. Thanks, man. The same. Yeah. Beer back.

Now this is why it was sad. This is how come it's so goddamn sad, Nussbaum. I mean, you look at pictures of them when they were kids, Ronnie and Alice. They were high school sweethearts; I don't believe she had ever had another man. And there's the two of them, Ronnie beaming at the camera, Alice with her arm hooked around his, beaming up at him. Beaming at him. Like he has the only penis in the world. So goddamn it amighty, ain't it lucky she found him. And the future, there ain't no future on their minds—hell, ain't gonna be no problems there, ain't even worth thinking about. What the hell, he's *got* the penis. Grinning, and if he's grinning, well then why wouldn't Alice grin too. Kids. What do kids know. What do kids know, Nussbaum.

Yeah, no, I meant she'd never had another man *then*. When they got together. Or afterward either, for that matter, up until Ronnie started in with the hanky-panky. And even then it wasn't spite. Wasn't tit for tat, Alice wasn't sleeping with me to get even. She's not that kind of woman, Numbus, she didn't even think of it as having sex. Nussbaum. Sorry. She just had to unburden herself. She had to share, share with someone; it was reaching out. She reached out. This is a sweet woman. And her husband says, he's saying, "Our sex life is blah." That's what Ronnie said. At The Healing Center. In front of a counselor. And then he suggested they use *sex toys*? A woman like Alice—*sex toys?* Alice Harper will not use dildos, Nussbaum. Not for you, not for me. Not for this man's army. Dildos are out of the question. "Our sex life is blah," he is saying, in front of a guy with a ponytail. A nodding guy with a ponytail. And dildos. This incredible, incredible woman. So she reaches out——

It is *not* the same thing. That is just ignorant, and just shows that you haven't understood what I been telling you about each of these people. *He* did it 'cause he was a damn sex fiend. He couldn't control himself. It's not that *she* couldn't control herself.

Yeah, she stabbed him. But she—she—OK, in that sense she couldn't control herself. But that's not—that doesn't make her, uh. . . . Her and Ronnie, it was love. Sometimes it comes from a place of love. A place of love, Nussbaum. Don't you goddamn understand that?

Well that's because you don't understand love.

No. No you don't. Not if you say, She was fucking someone too. You don't understand *shit*. And you're goddamn *right* I was his best friend. So get the fuck off that stool. Right the fuck now. Asshole.

No, I will *not* answer one question. Just get the fffff——

Huh?

Marcia? No.

No, I don't know whether she's currently dating.

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INSIDE THE MANSION *(continued from page 89)*

Life was more delectable in those houses than it had ever been anywhere else in the world.

ever really wanted, ever really wants. Somehow, if you are very clever or very lucky, you get yourself there. (I had my ways; I made sure of that, thank you.) But we have all been there. We have all been privy. Across five decades, by way of gleaming paper stock, on these pages hungrily thumbed, we were granted admittance, given glimpses, permitted peeks. And then there were the television specials—free network passes into paradise tangible. Hef saw to it that we saw it, too. (Certainly this was his plan, to make men and women alike behold *possibility*, but still—other guys with such vision mightn't have been so, well, hospitable.) Here, laid before our wide eyes, were the domestic fixtures, naked and architectural, hot and (most) cool, of his two Playboy Mansions—of *our* two Playboy Mansions, yours and mine—pads deliriously palatial, repositories of ultimate male fantasy, hulking shrines to all sybaritism. Every published picture and videotaped revel would tell a new secret. But the most important secret of all wasn't really much of a secret: Life was more delectable in those houses than it had ever been anywhere else in the world. For a guy, especially.

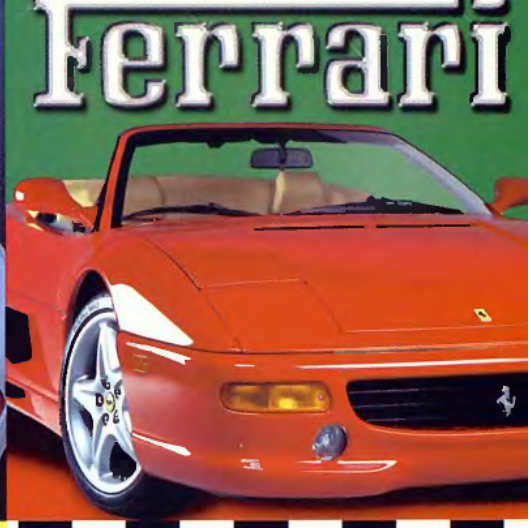
I think of a toast coined recently by one grateful habitué of both houses, the dashing actor Robert Culp, who exhorts on special occasions of male camaraderie at Playboy Mansion West: "Gentlemen, gentlemen, be of good cheer, for *they* are out there, and *we* are in here!" Upon reflection, it seems to me that Culp is gloating. Understandably.

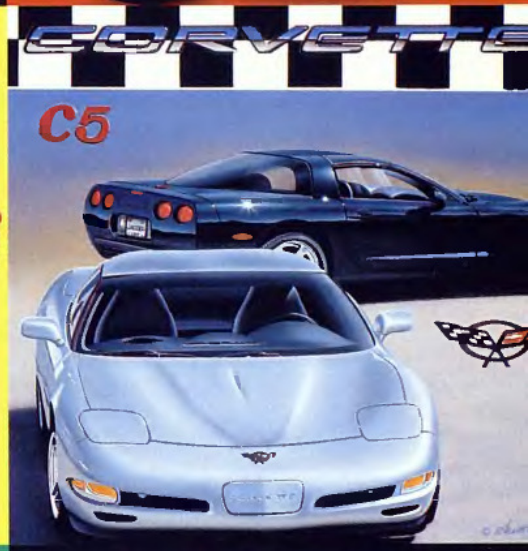
To be inside: Parties. Gadgets. Grottoes. Games. Beautiful women. Hidden passages. More parties. Bunnies. Bounty. Famous people. Playmates. Pillow fights. Peacocks. Movies. Monkeys. Cool jazz. Warm Jacuzzis. Waterfalls. Nude sunbathing. Nude moonbathing. Much, much nudity. Orgiastic sex. Still more parties. Dionysus would have blushed. This is the world of Hugh M. Hefner, spinning on its coveted access. Now, quite happily, there is occasion again to pass through the portals, to consider all that has been Mansion Life, to ponder the significance of one man's real estate holdings. I refer to the publication of a time-capsule treasury, a large shelter book of secret peeks within the walls, entitled *Inside the Playboy Mansion*—third in a series of lush PLAYBOY nostalgia volumes. This book is large because so too are the legends, not to mention the private pictures of play and pleasure, Hef-style. It is simply an interior history of American hedonism, a family album for the gainfully uninhibited. What also emerges, by no coincidence, is a depiction most intimate of personal evolution in the Hefner life—his loves, his losses, his battles, his dreams come true—set inextricably against the backdrop of the two houses he famously hated to step outside of. He liked to be, you know, inside. Understandably.

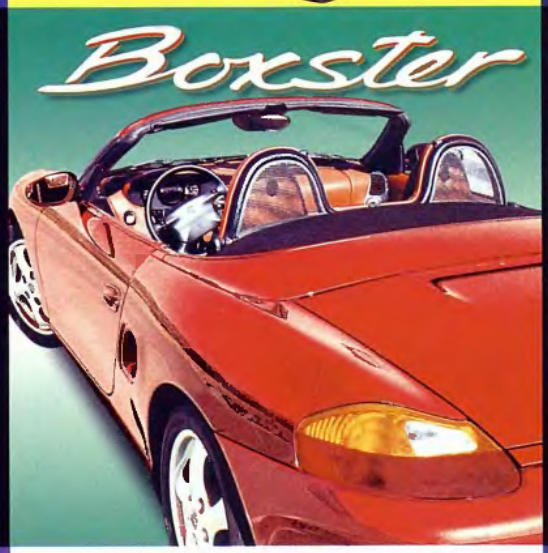
Cartoon from this magazine, 1970: A man has clambered to a mountain peak to beg wisdom from a cross-legged guru. Guru tells man: "In a place called Chicago, there's a man who lives in a mansion full of beautiful women and wears pajamas all the time. Sit at his feet and learn from him, for he has found the secret of true happiness."

Let us begin in Chicago, where all things PLAYBOY must. It is here that Hefner was born—as were his magazine, his key clubs, his television show, his sexual freedom, his house. *The* House. The original! Here was *the* Playboy Mansion, no geographical caveat necessary! It loomed, it glistened, a stately turn of the century brick and stone monolith, imposing its majesty on a leafy street of swells who were going to be forever outswelled. Six years into his empire building, in a 1959 year-end letter sent to investors, the manor's prescient future occupant—this 33-year-old workaholic editor-publisher-dreamer—wrote, almost as afterthought: "On the personal side, we've bought a house at 1340 North State Parkway, which should make the living considerably easier and more pleasant. It is a magnificent place, with a giant main room that will be great for parties; we're building an elaborate indoor swimming pool downstairs that will make this mansion the talk of all Chicago. It should help me get away from the office scene a bit and relax a little more."

Um. Evidence would indicate that he did, in fact, get away from the office scene. And, yes, there would be relaxation. To assure such, every crevice of







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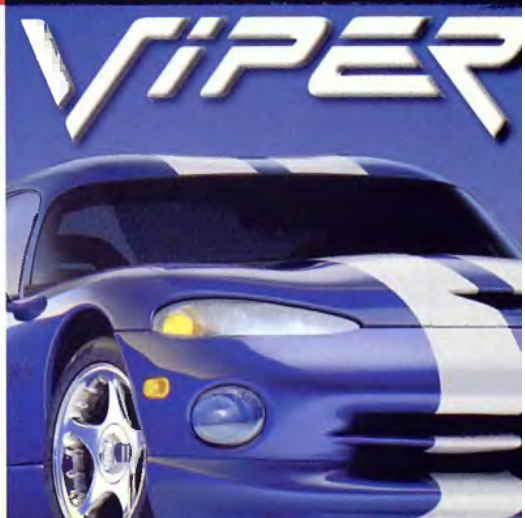

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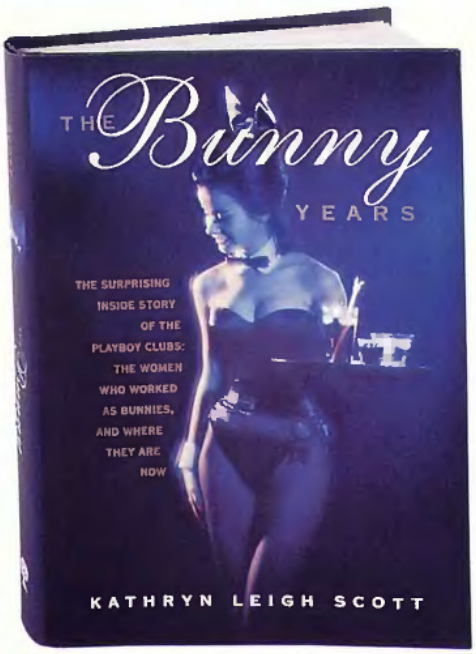
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the vast structure had been redesigned to render life almost structureless. Sealing himself within his new grand vacuum, work and play fused together, intermingled, danced as one, frugged up a storm. Regimen knew no boundaries and this was beautiful. Why commute? Just move the paperwork off the bed and make room for the girls. There was no time squandered, only time savored. "Separates me from the wasted motions," Hef said of the ingenious setup. He would also say later, most memorably, "The Mansion ended up working so well that going out came to seem like a useless exercise. What the hell was it I was supposed to go out for?" Legends ensued: "When was the last time I left this house, Lee? Three and a half months ago?" (He had to ask; he asked anyone around him, quite proudly at that.) "How many times have I been out of this house in the last two years? About nine times." (He usually answered himself, ever the impatient one.) This was 1965. Mythos varied: I have heard he left eight times in nine years, five times in seven years, ten in six, whatever; one got the point. He took a girl into the front yard during a blizzard to build a snowman: *The panic!* "When we got back," he recalled, "we learned that the news had spread through the house like there'd been a prison break—*'He's gone out! Hef's gone out!'*"

Fine pedigreed writers came to gawk at the spectacle. How could they resist? Here was a man in total control of his own environment, who had everything right where he wanted it. I mean, *everything*. Unheard of. Tom Wolfe, who dubbed Hef "King of the Status Dropouts," christened the house "Lollygag Heaven." Of the aforementioned King, Wolfe wrote, as only Wolfe could: "Thirty-nine years old! A recluse! Bona fide! Right this minute, one supposes, he is somewhere in there in the innards of those 48 rooms, under layers and layers of white wall-to-wall, crimson wall-to-wall, Count Basie–lounge leather, muffled, baffled, swaddled, shrouded, closed in, blacked out, shielded by curtains, drapes, wall-to-wall, blonde wood, honey-shuck, magnolia or something, all those earphones, screens, cords, doors, buzzers, dials, Nubians—he's down in there, the living Hugh Hefner, 150 pounds, like the tender-tympany green heart of an artichoke."

He was never lonely therein. "Physical isolation isn't the same as psychological isolation," he would explain. Indeed, everyone came to Hef's, to see, to play, to watusi or canoodle. Names from Frank Sinatra to Johnny Carson, the Rolling Stones to Barbra Streisand, Muhammad Ali to Joe DiMaggio. I mean, *everyone*. You don't have the time. They entered at street level, ascended a marble staircase to find that white French door affixed with perhaps the most

notorious brass plaque in the history of threshold passage. Smaller than you would think, the warning came in Latin: "*Si Non Oscillas, Noli Tintinnare.*" (But of course: "If you don't swing, don't ring.") Yonder beckoned the grand ballroom—"the size of a basketball court," Hef liked to point out—where two suits of armor stood sentry over bacchanals unending. There, amid the paintings of Picasso and De Kooning, amid the carved oaken filigrees and mammoth corniced pillars, jazzmen wailed, martinis rattled, Bunnies grooved. These Happenings happened just one flight above the indoor tropical pool whose hidden cave of hidden love—the Woo Grotto, to be sure—was visible only to those who spied down through a trapdoor, also hidden, in the ballroom floor. (Exclamations of *woo*, and the variation, *woo-woo*, issued inevitably from peeps on high.) Meanwhile, those who swam elsewhere in the pool could be appreciated through a picture window in the subterranean Underwater Bar, most easily reached by way of sliding down a brass firepole. (Both Dean Martin and Batman reportedly stole Hefner's pole notion for their respective TV shows.) Other accoutrements abounded: Girls, girls, girls, of course; plus game room, bowling alley, steam room, sauna, third-floor Bunny dormitories *(oh, convenience!)*, red-liveried housemen, 24-hour kitchen, spiral stairways, hi-fi stereo console the length of a limousine with phonic features to fill four paragraphs—suffice it to say, state-of-the-art in hissless bliss.

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Hefner's Chicago Bed—this was a historical feat of whimsy and engineering, a technological wonder worthy of Smithsonian installation. Perfectly round, eight-and-a-half feet in diameter, it rotated—*revolutionary!*—clockwise, counterclockwise, at the twist of a dial in the headboard controls, purring softly, moving, turning. "It goes 33⅓, 45 and 78!" Hef told rapt visitors to the master quarters. (Also, it vibrated and massaged.) Without moving an inch, he changed his room, spinning atop The Bed, subdividing areas of a white-carpeted universe (remove shoes, please)—hi-fi and twin movie screens this way; conversational couch that way; Italian marble fireplace and polar-bear hearth rug here; desktop dining on the sleek walnut headboard there. Sectional permissiveness! "Hef—in a James Bond world," wrote Wolfe, who saw The Bed for exactly what it was: "The center of the world!" Off the north wall hummed the Electronic Entertainment Room replete with, well, everything, including early Ampex videotape recorders—what, 20 years ahead of schedule, when your basic VCR cost 20 grand per. Pad down a secret spiral staircase to his prized gold-fauceted Roman Bath, which comfortably seated eight

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beneath gentle drizzle, then repair a few steps to an undulant water bed, another American first on the premises. ("He gets so much action," Dean Martin once noted, "he's got the only water bed with whitecaps.") As such—as with all Mansion indulgence—Hef could do, or view, whatever he wanted whenever he wanted it.

Whenever was big: No sun shone in the house. Draped out and ignored, time of day meant nothing here. The man of the Mansion liked to stay up for days on end, editing, Philosophizing, discoursing, loving, game playing. (Sixty-hour Pepsi-fueled, dexedrine-enhanced Monopoly marathons! Not for sissies, fellows.) "The wee hours were the whee hours," quoth Hef, "because while the rest of the world was asleep, romantic dreams were more likely to come true." Thus, party nights became party mornings. Norman Mailer, who observed his share of them, wrote of one: "The party was very big, and it was a good party. The music went all the way down into the hour or two before breakfast, but no one saw the dawn come in, because the party was at Hugh Hefner's house, which is one of the most extraordinary houses in America. I never saw the sky from that room, and so there was a timeless, spaceless sensation. Timeless, spaceless, it was outward bound. One was in an ocean liner which traveled at the bottom of the sea, on a spaceship wandering down the galaxy along a night whose duration was a year."

•

It never should have ended. It had to. Pallor—however defiant, however triumphant—will wear upon a man's soul. The Great Indoors, the Pneumatic Era, the Chicago Hermitage began to fatigue its chief proponent. His residency waned; he needed fresh air; he took flight. On the *Big Bunny*, his glorious jet-black DC-9 (with airborne round Bed, with Jet Bunnies attending), he flew—west mostly, to Los Angeles, home of his formative Hollywood dreams, where show business wanted his business more than ever. He flew there and flew there until a house was found to keep him there. Paradise Found: January 1971. Ladylove Barbi Benton saw it first; Hefner, besotted by the splendor, purchased it in February. A baronial Tudor manor perched atop the greenest of slopes, swathed in five acres of what would become Eden—here, then, was the perfect Hollywood sequel: "A new Playboy Mansion for a new decade," he would say, "interconnected to nature as the Chicago Mansion could never be. I had found the place where I would live out my life, and do my best to create a heaven on earth."

Playboy Mansion West would forever be the prettier sister, the sun-drenched blonde versus the dusky brunette, appropriately curvier of terrain—and, man, what foliage! Heaven could only hope. Cynics would only gush. *Spy* magazine: "If ever a place was not just a place but a state of mind, this place is that place." *Rolling Stone*: "A crenellated, mullioned slab of Olde Englishry, a gray gleam of ersatz granite in the southern California sunlight. To the back, the image dissolves, reforms. Sexy vicarage metamorphoses to miniaturized Versailles." Let me translate: Here was Europe, one block off Sunset Boulevard. Here, in the muffled crook of Charing Cross Road—shimmering epicenter of Holmby Hills—was a foreign serenity. Yet even its attendant history seemed to call Hefner home. By fine coincidence, construction of his magic castle had begun in the year of his birth. This he took as a sign. Also, neighbors of yore had been his idols of youth—Harlow, Disney (another Chicago-born dream merchant made good), Bogie and Bacall. Indeed, the Bogarts had lived just over the back wall, where their original Holmby Hills Rat Pack convened, where Sinatra legendarily passed wee hours very whee. But better Holmby whee was to come.

Make Mansion West a Shangri-la, Hugh Hefner did decree. And so he would design his Eden from scratch, take a great barren backyard (save for

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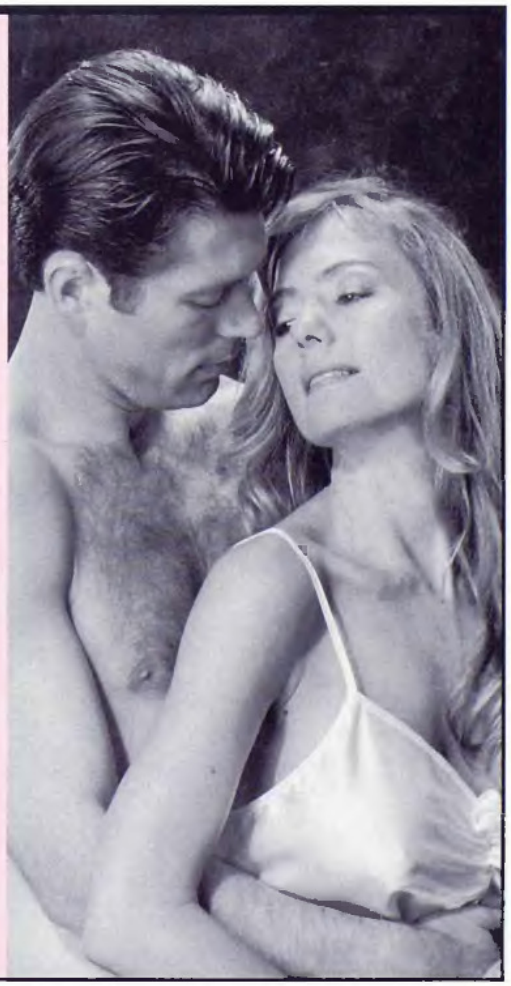

southern California's only stand of redwoods) and install an oasis, verdant and wet. Like a god possessed, he oversaw all minutiae: "WHERE THE HELL ARE MY LILY PADS?" he famously inquired at one happy juncture. The property that had come sans pool soon had its own swimming lagoon with waterfalls spilling over a Grotto of steaming whirlpools beside koi ponds set inside rolling lawns where flamingos mixed with peacocks, cranes with ducks, a llama nibbled flowers (and also Playmate elbows—don't ask; weird animal), and—poetry, please—rabbits ruled. Or romped, at least. And oh, what romping went on. Wildlife flourished, yes; but also Wild Life, amongst and betwixt consenting adults, of course—this was what gave the lay of the land, if you will, its legacy.

Naturally, then, our most libertine decade—the Seventies—found its primal laboratory at Mansion West: Monkeys swung in the trees, but humans swung everywhere else. Hef had arranged the accommodations—even the Game House had mirrored love nooks. Meanwhile, his own master Bed West, not round but extra vast, with carved nude nymphs in oak relief, with automated curtains and mirrors and headboard all shiftable—this thing was the sultan's magic carpet! Still, nothing lured besporting events like the Grotto. Four Jacuzzi baths burbled within, tenderizing moments most tender. Candlelit romance amid boulders! Stone ledges with big cushions! "If those rocks could talk . . ." I heard Hef tell Leonardo DiCaprio not long ago. (To finish the sentence might finish careers.) But it is fair to say: Those rocks have seen most everything and most everyone (celebritywise) making waves, usually without clothes. Of course, there was the night of Hef's 58th birthday when 18 gorgeous naked women waited in his Grotto to fete him, and him alone, as hidden speakers (inside fibrous rocks, natch) blared *To All the Girls I've Loved Before*—the popular tune that had been officially dedicated to him, and him alone.

"Ah," as Hef would say, then and now, "just another typical day at the Mansion."

Truth universal, from *Beverly Hills Cop II*, 1987: Eddie Murphy, as Detective Axel Foley, crashes a Mansion West bikini party in pursuit of felon. (Chris Rock works as parking valet in Hefner's fabled circular driveway.) Stepping into the backyard, where semiclad Playmates frolic, Murphy is thunderstruck: *"Jesus Christ!"* He clutches his own crotch: "Wake up!" he orders crotch. "This is what we always talked about, so look alive! You may never see it again."

The never part always gets me. Time took the Chicago Mansion, which has now gone condo. I ask Hef how he feels about that. "Not good," he says woefully. "It's not progress." He had kept it for years, unwilling to let go, though he all but never returned there. For a minute, in 1975, it was put on the market: "Given the choice," columnist Bob Greene wrote at the time, "I would rather see the White House burn down." The Mansion stayed, but stayed largely unused, for another nine years, until it was donated, as a dormitory *(dormitory!)*, to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. It was, at least, the same school where, in a 1946 sketch class, Hef gazed upon his first naked female in the flesh. (He is nothing if not a sucker for such symmetry.) About a year before art students seized Hefner Hall, as it was rechristened, I wandered the house and looked for nude ghosts. I poked through artifacts under dustcovers and sat on the Bed and spun and nearly wept. It wasn't even my stuff, but I think maybe it kind of was. Now the Bed is in storage, awaiting a millennium PLAYBOY memorabilia tour. I know this because I've sort of mentioned the Bed a lot to Hef. He humors me, I think.

But—wait—I intend no dirge here. For lush life lives eternal in the West! Parties persist, but with rejuvenated gusto. "Maybe we're going back to the Seventies," Hef keeps saying, ever dreamily, thus legendarily. His own life has seen changes—now two young sons have happy run of Shangri-la when they wish. "It really is a perfect place to grow up," their father has said. "I know, because I grew up here." But, of course, he himself will never not be a boy—at least, in part—because the boy who he is reminds us that boys have better worlds. Hefner's world is still the world men most want to inhabit, to be inside. I see jaded guys get giddy therein.

At the most recent Midsummer Night's Dream party, for example, hundreds of first-timers—men and women alike—prowled about in sleepwear, gawking amid the reverie and the lingerie, conjuring the past they'd missed. Famous newcomers like Jim Carrey, George Clooney, Bill Maher, Cameron Diaz, Leonardo, et cetera, et cetera—you don't have the time—even they seemed to share this sense of wonderment. *"I can't believe I'm at the Playboy Mansion!"* Clooney actually blurted at one point, as if to pinch himself. Many hours later, at five in the morning, he was still there, hanging with Carrey and a handful of stragglers. Hef couldn't get rid of them.

I know this because, um, I was still there, too. Tough place to leave, you know.

"And he's suing us, claiming we discriminate against people who are uneducated and incompetent."

WEATHER *(continued from page 122)*

"Even a relatively modest increase in sea level can suddenly scour out a whole harbor or beachfront."

feedback systems could give us more time to figure out global warming, and to adjust to it. But Klinger isn't convinced that global warming is happening at all. While some areas are warming, other sites—including the Mountain Research Station of the University of Colorado, in the hills he can see through his office window—have registered a cooling trend over the past 40 years. He thinks we may have jumped the gun on global warming.

"Whether the whole world is warming or cooling is not known," says Klinger. "And I suspect it's cooling in the long run." But these are risky views among mainstream scientists. "I'm most bothered by the implication that if you don't believe in global warming, you're not a respectable scientist," says Klinger.

THE MINORITY VIEW

The 100-inch telescope at Mount Wilson is a classic, high in the peculiarly clear air above Los Angeles' smog. The mirror was cast from recycled wine bottles at the same French factory that once produced the Versailles mirrors. The simple bentwood chair from which Edwin Hubble discovered that the universe is expanding—the core idea of the Big Bang theory—is still in place. Sallie Baliunas, an astrophysicist from the Harvard–Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has been using the telescope to study stars that act like our sun. And she thinks that the sun is doing more to warm the planet than people give it credit for. This would mean that fossil fuels are doing less.

Most scientists believe that the sun is basically stable and therefore a powerful but little-changing influence on climate. It wasn't until the late Eighties that scientists began to realize that the sun's energy output varies—if only by a tenth of one percent over a decade.

Baliunas admits, "Climate people say, and rightly so: 'It's a couple of sneezes to the climate system. It's not really worth fussing over.'" But what they miss, she says, is that the sun's energy has varied even more in the past. She cites a 70-year period during the 17th century known as the Little Ice Age. "There has been some recent global warming, but it looks like it's mostly natural," she says. "If there is a human effect, it's quite small."

That assessment aligns her with scientists who say we needn't rush to change the way we use energy. This includes Richard Lindzen, an MIT meteorologist who contends that any warming from increased carbon dioxide is well within the climate's normal range. Two chemists at the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine contend that lusher vegetation from higher carbon dioxide levels will actually be a boon to future generations. In agreement are two think tanks, the libertarian Cato Institute and the George C. Marshall Institute, as well as Global Climate Coalition, a group largely supported by the fossil-fuel industry and many of its biggest customers.

Many skeptics, in fact, read temperature data from satellites as indicating that, over the past two decades, the world has been cooling—and that global warming predictions are just plain wrong.

It's a bitter fight. Trenberth, at NCAR, describes these opponents as "contaminated by vested interests," and says they are "very selective" in their use of data. The skeptics fire back that all scientists get funding from somewhere, including government scientists who get more research money when the public thinks it's facing a major crisis. "Everyone has an agenda," notes Baliunas.

Greenhouse skeptics have particularly argued with James Hansen, director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York and the best-known proponent of the global warming theory.

"It's normal in science to have a broad range of perspectives on any problem," Hansen says. And he agrees that studying the sun's changing energy is "a very legitimate research topic. I think the sun is one of the factors that influence climate. But it's certainly small compared

"Anybody in here know anything about a sleigh with eight tiny reindeer parked in a handicapped zone?"

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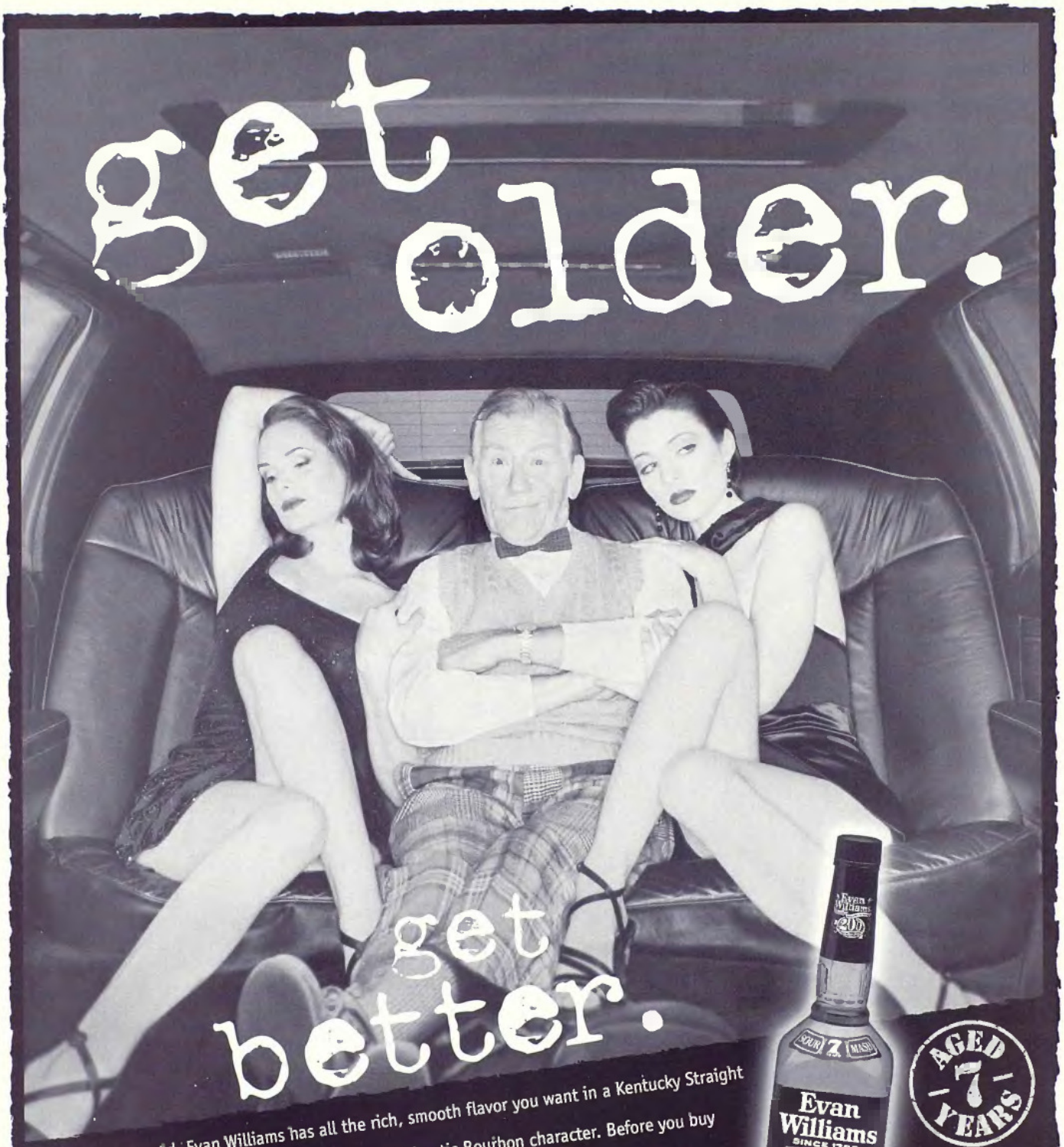

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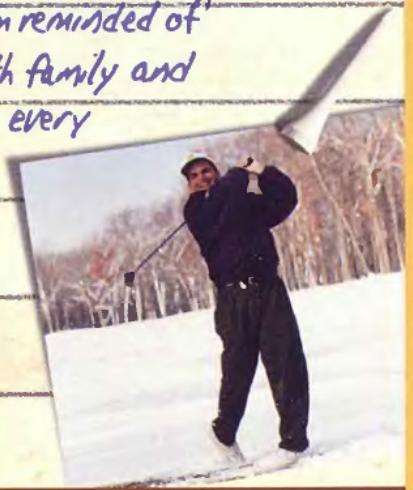

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to the impact, especially the eventual impact, of greenhouse gases."

ARE WE TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING USEFUL?

If there is global warming, it can be slowed. Many scientists argue that we should have started reducing our consumption of fossil fuels long ago. Even a modest increase in the gasoline tax would encourage the use of alternative energy. These technologies could be exported to an energy-hungry developing world—particularly before that world builds more coal-burning power plants. Energy conservation would also help—from tightened standards for the average miles-per-gallon we get from our cars to wearing a sweater during winter. So would planning help some of the losers in the global warming lottery, especially those with equatorial rain forests to preserve.

"We can't say with certainty what will happen in the future, much less what will happen if we change something now," says Thomas Conway, a NOAA research chemist in Boulder who tallies the steady rise in carbon dioxide around the world. "But certainly it would be in our interest to reduce the rate of carbon dioxide being emitted into the atmosphere. That will give us more time to adjust to whatever changes may occur."

And many other scientists call for a relatively easy task: Put a little more money into finding out what's really going on.

"One of the cheapest things we can do is simply to monitor what's happening to the climate," says Karl. He notes that while existing equipment gives reasonable information about some changes, we can't get solid data on changes in such extreme weather events as tornadoes, hail, high winds and thunderstorms.

Roger Pielke Jr., an NCAR scientist who specializes in public policy, agrees we need better monitoring. He has been studying extreme storms—hurricanes, floods and blizzards among them. The global warming debate has been misconstrued, Pielke believes, into "global warming: yes or no?" He suggests that even if global warming were not an issue, 95 percent of our climate and weather-related problems would still be with us and worth doing something about. "We don't know how many people live in floodplains in the U.S.," Pielke says, "so we don't know how vulnerable we are to floods. If you say it's going to get worse, we should know how bad it is already."

If we assume global warming is going to occur, Pielke says, we'll have floods, blizzards and hurricanes. "And if we assume that it's not going to occur, we will still have floods, blizzards and hurricanes. Those are going to persist throughout time."

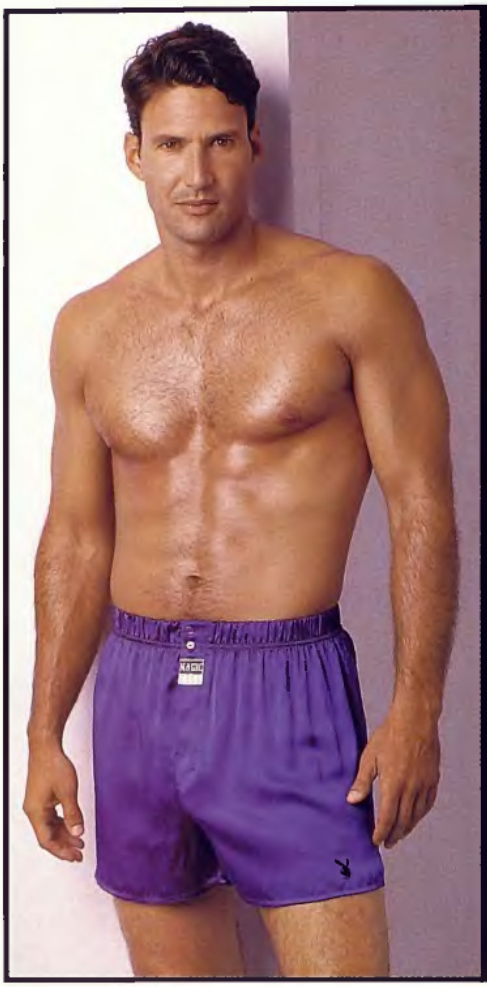
Last Man Of Letters

(continued from page 88)

of ice cubes in delicate crystal goblets. X tried to behave as if he were not astonished but perhaps halfway accustomed to such episodes of high gleefulness; he clapped robustly, laughing. What did he care that he would be awakened by a call at 6:30 A.M., to be driven to the airport; what did he care for mere sleep, he who had often stayed up through the night working at his books, and sometimes, though less frequently, making vigorous love. Already the girls had taken over the sitting room. There was the German publicist, full, shapely, perfumy; there was the French girl translator he'd misjudged as plain, graceless and without feminine charm, quite transformed now, with rouged cheeks and lips, mischievously shining eyes and a ripe body that strained at the silk fabric of her costume. With giggles, X was pushed onto a sofa. With the jarring sound of an artery popping, the enormous champagne bottle was uncorked; the ebullient Italian girl splashed some champagne into a long-stemmed glass for X, and into glasses for herself and her companions, and she raised her glass in a toast, declaring that this midnight feast was in homage to a great writer, to the last man of letters, whose work had penetrated their souls and changed their lives permanently—"Signor X, thank you!" Breathless, X drank from his glass; the champagne was delicious, though slightly tart, with a queer metallic bouquet; its myriad miniature bubbles flew up his nostrils and into his brain, to burst. More toasts followed, for the girls were insatiable in their praise of X. He begged them, "Please, please! Enough! You are very kind, but——" And they crowded in to kiss him, wild wet kisses landing anywhere, as one of the German girls cried, "Ah, no, Herr X, we are not kind at all, we are only just." Though X tried to push their hands away, the girls prepared him for the feast like a great baby, tucking a linen napkin beneath his chin; the French girl patted him familiarly up and down his sides and gave his cheek a caress; another girl bestowed a wet smacking kiss on his right ear, and another girl bestowed a wet smacking kiss on the dome of his head; more champagne was splashed into glasses and drunk; champagne ran in rivulets down X's chin and wetted the linen napkin; X understood that this was a game, perhaps it was a game he'd played in the past, a celebration of his worth. He, the male, was the girls' captive, their trophy: They were his preening captors but also his adoring slaves.

Next, they competed with one another to ply X with delicacies from the silver cart: an apple pared and sliced into bite-sized pieces, pâté lavishly smeared on a piece of crusty bread, a large chocolate-covered truffle. To his surprise, X was hungry after all, ravenously hungry, his angel-girls had aroused his long-dulled appetite, tears glistened in his eyes as he

"Everything seemed to be going just fine until he married my sister."



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ate, he squirmed on the sofa racked with delight as with an almost unbearable pain. The girls exchanged excited murmurs in their accented English, as if X's greedy appetite pleased them; he could hear their voices distinctly but he could not understand their words. It was then that the midnight feast took an abruptly salacious turn; X tried to protest, his dressing gown was torn open, his naked body was exposed, feebly he tried to hide his genitals, but the girls snatched his hands away. Shouting with glee, the girls hoisted him to their shoulders, his considerable bulk of nearly 200 pounds, crying, "Heave-ho! Here we go!" and stumbling and staggering like drunken revelers they bore him flailing and kicking into the sumptuous bedroom, with much laughter and little ceremony he was dropped onto the rumpled bed, which he'd feared was the girls' destination from the first, theirs and his. When X opened his mouth to protest, for he was a contentedly married man, and a gentleman, a bold kiss stopped it; the acrobatic French girl with her sinewy, squirmy body pinioned him to the mattress, and one of the German girls clambered beside him; the girls had shed their bellboy costumes and X himself was naked now; he would have cringed in shame except his aged flaccid body was pronounced beautiful by his captors, his skin admiringly stroked, how handsome X was! How manly! The girls took turns straddling his chest, kissing him with deep, sucking kisses; sucking at his tongue as if to tear it from his mouth; sucking at his breath; X could feel, against his strangely cool, dampish skin, the powerful heat of the girls' skin; the heat between their naked thighs as they straddled his chest and belly; the crinkly damp of their pubic hair; the pulse and throb of their young bodies. When had they tied him, wrists and ankles, to the four carved-mahogany posts of the immense canopied bed? Tied him with silken cords? His hairy navel, his hollow, sagging belly button, was smeared with pâté to be licked by rapacious, tickling tongues; he was being forced to lick goat cheese from the navel of the fleshier of the German girls; all the girls shrieked with impudent laughter; if X's enemies saw him now, what tales they would spread! What legends! The girls were vying with one another to touch, to fondle, to stroke his limp penis, a limp veined old carrot of a penis, and the testicles delicate and cool as quail's eggs; roughly the girls tickled the pubic hair that was a coarse yellow-white, like wires; the Fräulein had discovered the scar from X's abdominal surgery of several years ago, an eight-inch scar like a zipper in his sallow flesh, and playfully she ran manicured red talons up and down the scar—"Zip zip *zip*, Herr X!" Tonia, or Tanya, panting with desire, had smeared her buoyant breasts with whipped cream

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and her pert little nipples were maraschino cherries X was obliged to eat, how she screamed when he bit her, screamed and kicked and struck him with her hard fists, so that for an instant he was terribly afraid. But the French girl was squealing in triumph for she'd managed at last to stroke X's penis into a steely rod. All the girls exclaimed at its length, its elasticity, its healthy burnished-red hue, its throbbing heat; greedily they competed to hold it, to stroke and caress it, to kiss its tip that gleamed with precious juices, the very elixir of life. "Stop. No. Please!" X begged. For the sensation was almost more than he could bear. He was covered in perspiration and panting as if he'd run up the seven flights of stairs to this very room. His heart was banging like an impatient fist against his rib cage. One of the girls had lowered herself over his penis, having stroked it to a red-hot rod, and had fitted her satiny, smooth and muscular vagina over it, thrusting herself down upon him, and gripping him tightly; X heard his groans like strangulation; he was sobbing, and then he was laughing; the lights in the bedroom were in fact candle flames and these flames were now being blown out. X pleaded, "Stop! My dignity! Don't you know who I am?" And at once the girls cried, "Yes, we know who you are, you are X, the last man of letters!" And a scalding geyser erupted from the very pit of his belly; his eyes flew open and his heart ceased beating; the astonishment of such a moment, the wonder of it; he was alive after all, alive, and young, and his life lay before him; the shell that was X slipped away, he was free, triumphant. "Thank you!"—X's words were sobs, a lover's plea, snatched from his throat even as consciousness was extinguished like a blinding-bright fluorescent light in a white-tiled bathroom.

And in the morning, to their shock and distress, they found him. After X failed to respond to telephone calls and anxious knockings at his door, his Italian publisher, who'd arrived to escort X personally to the airport, directed the hotel manager to force the double-locked door, and there in the darkened bedroom lay the old man lifeless on the carpet beside his bed, his arms outflung as if in protest. Champagne had been spilled on the carpet, and on X; there was a lurid trace of chocolate on X's gaping mouth, and what appeared to be pâté was smeared on his torso and belly; his face was deathly pale and his cheeks sunken; his dentures were in a water glass beside his bed. X's eyes were starkly open, yet sightless; the left eyeball was turned up into his head as if peering inside, inquisitively. The publisher crossed himself and cried, *"L'ultimo uomo di Lettere. O Dio. . . ."*

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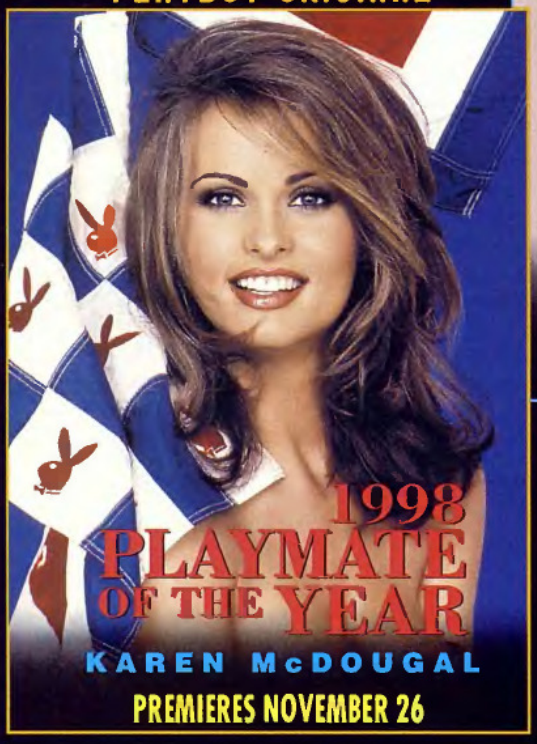

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KEVIN SMITH (continued from page 152)

His obsession paid off: He was given $400,000 to write the script for the next "Superman" film.

Jersey looking for locations for two Coke commercials Smith is shooting.

"We're involved in the cola wars now, dude," Smith tells his troops as we cruise Red Bank in his green Jeep Cherokee. "We should show up on the set with some Food Town cola. They'd be like, 'Why aren't you drinking Coke?' 'Coke? Who can drink that shit?'" The Jeep rocks with laughter.

Clerks also had a profound effect on the indie film community. "It's pretty obvious that the first two most influential debuts in the Nineties were *Clerks* and *The Brothers McMullen*," says producer John Pierson, author of *Spike, Mike, Slackers and Dykes*, a history of low-budget films. "We started hearing about films described as the 'Canadian *Clerks*' and '*Clerks* in a Graveyard.' One day this guy calls my office and says, 'My film is just like *Clerks*, only without the jokes.' And that's when things get scary."

After his hit debut, Smith himself was full of piss and vinegar. He planned a teen hit, a populist bonehead comedy about young Americans who roam a mall in search of excitement and love. It would also be a tribute to Eighties filmmakers John Hughes and John Landis, who had moved and entertained him during his adolescence. He would give it a catchy name: *Mallrats*. Smith's then-girlfriend and *Mallrats* star Joey Lauren Adams remembers that he told her not to consider chickenshit roles because this film was going to make her a huge star. Instead, the $6.1 million *Mallrats* bombed. It grossed less than *Clerks* did and was eaten alive by critics.

If dinner with Harvey Weinstein signaled his arrival with *Clerks*, there is a parallel memory to go along with 1995's *Mallrats*. Smith was in LA driving the freeways the week before the film hit the theaters. He had a studio movie coming out and a new actor–girlfriend in the waiflike Adams. He had, in LA terms, arrived. "Everything was gangbusters," he remembers. Flipping on the radio, Smith came across an easy-listening station where a "chick's voice" announced that she had just seen a screening of *Mallrats*. The disc jockey went out of her way to warn people about it. "I was just like, 'Wow, that's pretty weird,'" Smith remembers.

He had clearly misread his own gifts. *Mallrats*' broad comedy, free-floating vulgarity and physical humor are exactly what he doesn't do well. People stayed away.

At the 1996 Sundance festival, Smith ate humble pie, saying, "I want to apologize for *Mallrats*. I have no idea what we were thinking." With his career at risk, Smith admitted his mistake. But with the success of *Chasing Amy*, he now defends the film like it's a troublesome child nobody likes.

"Personally, I'm a fan of *Mallrats*. I think that it's funny, a real watcher. And people were just like, Well, this is what happens when one of these kids gets money, and shit like that. But I think it was unfairly bashed, just as I think *Clerks* was overpraised. After *Chasing Amy*, people said, 'The kid has redeemed himself.' Which was really insulting, because it was like, redeem myself from what? What did I do wrong? I made a movie you didn't like. But guess what? I'll show you 50 fucking people who did like it."

Smith contends that *Mallrats* bypassed the critics and urban hipsters who had praised *Clerks* and found its audience in the great American leveler: video. It was a movie for his people, the dudes of New Jersey and elsewhere, the comic book readers, the potheads and the dropouts.

Then staying in Los Angeles, Smith found that his life had shifted off its moorings. His friends were back in New Jersey. His sidekick Jason Mewes—who played "Jay" in the films—was going through a rough period. And Smith was no longer the indie golden boy. Still, he was desperately in love with Adams—he even declared his desire to marry her in *Time* magazine. But he felt her grow cold when he talked about staying in Los Angeles permanently and starting a life with her. When his grandmother got sick, Smith went back to Red Bank and realized that that was where he belonged. He stayed.

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Those who applaud Smith's Red Bank operation say he has dedicated himself to the regional cinema he preached about. Critics say he wants to be a modern-day Peter Pan, never leaving his second childhood. His films share the same actors, characters, in-jokes and geography. As with Mark Leyner or Whit Stillman, Smith has built a small world to live in, explore and unmask.

Smith admits that he still hangs with the same eight or ten friends he has had for years. He indulges his fascination with *Star Wars* and comic books; his offices and apartment are crammed with everything from replicas of Luke Skywalker's light saber to artwork from Smith's favorite comic, *Batman*. Looking under his feet as we drive through the New Jersey countryside, I see that he has even tracked down Caped Crusader dirt mats for his Jeep.

What other young men found in Dostoyevsky or Burroughs, Smith found in the story of Bruce Wayne. "It's just flat-out literature with pictures," he says. "It deals thematically with literary terms and devices and characters that are so exciting. I had no edge as far as culture goes until I got into dark, literary comics." His obsession has even had a Hollywood payoff: He was given $400,000 to write the script for the next *Superman* film for Warner Bros. Director Tim Burton admired the script when he was brought onto the project, then he tossed it. But Smith is established as a writer Hollywood can go to for the voice of the young and the restless.

In *Chasing Amy*, his best film, two comic-book writing buddies are torn apart when Holden, played by Ben Affleck, falls in love with a lesbian, played by Adams. Then, in a replay of Smith's corduroy hand job crisis, Holden learns that his girlfriend has a wild heterosexual past, including multiple partners. He freaks out and the two are torn apart.

In a way it was his instinct for autobiography that saved Smith's career. Much of the *Amy* script—apart from the lesbian focus—was drawn from his real-life relationship with Adams.

"Holden was definitely the character closest to myself I'd ever written," Smith admits. "Here's a guy who's a typical Nineties liberal male who's like, 'Yeah, I'm from the suburbs, I got myself a black friend, me and my friend do this underground comic-book thing, I've got this girl I like and I'm very OK with her homosexual past.' It's in the arena you imagine he'd be most comfortable with—the heterosexual arena—that he completely malfunctions."

Amy is a piercingly funny film—a taboo-shredding social comedy. Some lesbians bristled at the movie, saying it reinforced the old canard that all a gay woman needs is the right man. For a gay-conscious filmmaker such as Smith, it was a frustrating accusation. But fans

and detractors alike had to admit that the defiant juvenile of *Mallrats* had produced one of the most emotionally challenging films of the year.

The film was a critical triumph that earned an impressive $11.1 million at the domestic box office. But Smith's relationship with Adams was tested by *Amy*. "We had our biggest fight ever on the set," Adams told me when the film was released. "We started screaming at each other. He's damn witty and a brilliant filmmaker, but he has a lazy side to him. I told him he was a bad director, and he didn't take it well." The two broke up in June 1997.

After the split, rumors began to circulate that Adams had dumped Smith for rising star Vince Vaughn. Smith posted on the View Askew Web site an explanation and a defense. "She's a funny, funny chick, a wonderful person to talk to, warm and friendly," Smith wrote. "But she's also extremely self-involved and something of a careerist who had an innate ability to make me feel flawed." Smith said it was he who had broken up with Adams and included assessments of the relationship (and scathing reviews of Adams herself) from Mosier and Affleck. It's almost as if the Internet had become Smith's public scrapbook.

In his films, women are central and empowered, but Smith's attitude toward them is complex. In the *Odyssey* there is a midterm evaluation from a woman who taught writing at Eugene Lang College, which Smith attended briefly: "Kevin is a good writer. He has wit, a command of language. Honestly, though, his depictions of women in vulnerable positions, being taken advantage of sexually and violently, are very disturbing." And yet the scrapbook also includes a love poem from the unlucky "Amy" that shows the other side of the director: "You never let me fall/You seem to understand exactly what I want to say before I speak."

Smith's films alternate between the highest romanticism and a brutally clear and distressed evaluation of his female characters. The director says he loves women (and "their genitalia"), but in his life and films he does invest them with great power—he admits to "deifying" Adams—and then resents them when they use it. Adams told me that she was puzzled by Smith's statement that she was the funniest woman he'd ever met. She thought that was going overboard, almost as if Smith were endowing her with dazzling qualities he wished her to possess.

Smith believes women learn faster than men and thus hold the upper hand in most relationships; they are cannier. "Every woman I've met, even teenagers, is fucking well beyond her years," says the director. "They have a cold-hearted realization of the world. Women have always had the goods on every guy I've ever met."

Smith's Web site, his ruthlessly honest interviews and his films all represent a kind of ongoing public therapy. "You get to put it out there, and you always feel less alone after a movie comes out, because you get to see how many other people are as fucked up as you are. After *Chasing Amy*, I was shocked at how many guys were like, 'I know exactly what you're talking about—my old lady's a whore, too!'"

With *Amy*, Smith also went all out in the matter of homoeroticism, topped off by the scene in which Affleck kisses co-star Jason Lee on the lips. It's a subject not confined to his films. Hanging out with the View Askew posse for a few days, one is struck by how rampant gay humor is here. When we visit Smith's comic-book store (bought with the proceeds from *Clerks*), his longtime friend Bryan is behind the counter. "Kevin has made several passes at me" is one of the first things Bryan says, and they instantly crack up. Jason Mewes kids that the director requires him to dress up in frilly costumes on special occasions. The jokes are almost reflexive.

Smith, who has a gay brother, believes sexuality is much more fluid than people think, and that what prevents people from playing both ways is not lack of desire but social taboos. Highlands was not a hotbed of tolerance when it came to gays. As a fat kid, Smith often made a joke about his weight before others could—and the same goes for homosexuality. "I realize you have tendencies in either direction, but eventually you pick a hole and stick with it. But that's not to say you can't ever have a fucking-across-the-line thought in your life."

If Smith decides to cross the line, Affleck had better watch his ass. "Ben Affleck is the king of my world," says Smith. "He's the only male crush I'll probably ever have. Ben is a god among men."

If bisexuality weren't controversial enough, Smith's next film will tackle organized religion with a raucous, black comic energy. *Dogma* is the story of two disgraced angels (Matt Damon and Affleck) whose attempts to re-enter heaven may bring worldwide apocalypse. A young Catholic woman (Linda Fiorentino) who works at Planned Parenthood is chosen to stop them. Along for the ride are a monster made of shit, a militant 13th apostle (Chris Rock) who reveals that Jesus is black, various horrors from hell and a female Godhead. If members of the Catholic League don't picket this one, they're comatose.

It will surprise many to learn that Smith is genuinely religious. He attended Catholic school and still shows up at mass regularly. When, in his early 20s, he began to have doubts about his faith and found the Catholic mass "dry and lip-servicey," he went to a priest for advice and was told that faith can be

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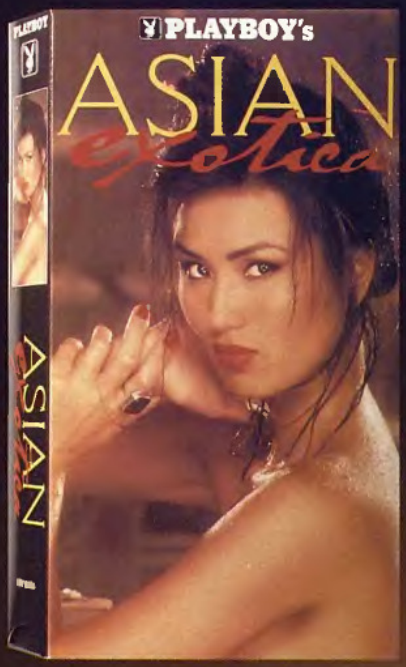

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compared to liquid. "When you're a young kid, you're a shot glass that's easy to fill. But the older you get, the bigger the glass gets. The amount of liquid that filled the shot glass isn't going to fill a tumbler."

Smith went out to fill his tumbler. He read voraciously on Christian subjects, looked into other religions, read the *Apocrypha*, tried a Pentecostal congregation and generally thought hard about faith. *Dogma* is the result.

The film combines Smith's beloved dick jokes with the Old Testament. Smith swears he isn't trying for shock value; it's just that this is his sensibility. "It's the idea of saying 'fucking God!' without being blasphemous; it's a very human experience," says the director. "To me *Dogma* is a reverent script. It's pro-faith, pro-God. It looks at what we built around religion."

What scared Smith before he began shooting *Dogma* was not the possibility of a religious backlash but the personal fear that, visually speaking, he would not be able to pull off the most complex, effects-laden picture of his career. *Clerks* proved that Smith could write snappy dialogue. *Chasing Amy* proved he could write emotionally complex adult dialogue. *Dogma* would be different: Smith's no-holds-barred attempt to show the world that he could be a visual stylist as well as a literary one. "I was terrified," he admits.

Now that the film is in the can, Smith believes he has succeeded—in spades. "If the naysayers walk away from this movie saying, 'He still sucks visually,' well, this is about the best I can do. I don't want to sound arrogant, but I really pulled it off—it looks phenomenal." As he edits the film down to its planned two-and-a-half-hour running time, Smith seems almost intoxicated by what he is seeing. "I'd be shocked if Ben Affleck didn't get an Oscar nomination," he said. Whether Smith is again tempting the fates that buried *Mallrats* will be known only when, if all goes according to plan, he unveils *Dogma* next spring.

Despite their juvenile trappings, all of Smith's films have involved a search for faith—in working-class dreams, in women, in male friendship and in God. In an era of $100 million films about nothing, such a theme is increasingly rare. But as he gears up for *Dogma*, Smith is convinced his singular film odyssey is not in vain.

"I watched *Die Hard* and loved it," says Smith. "But I'm not that guy. I would not jump off a building, shoot a terrorist or take my shirt off in public. But I watch something like *Chasing Amy* and I'm like, 'Well, I know that guy pretty damn well.' And, you know, there's got to be more people out there like me."

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HOLLY JOAN HART — PHOTO BY STEPHEN WAYOA

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SEX STARS 1998

(continued from page 155)

just starting in Hollywood, paired up with smoldering Spaniard **Antonio Banderas** to win American audiences in *The Mask of Zorro*. The names of **Cameron Diaz**, 25, and **Jim Carrey** (at 36, an elder statesman in this crowd) on theater marquees virtually guaranteed box-office success. No longer did producers require the signing of a **Mel Gibson**, a **Bruce Willis**, a **Michelle Pfeiffer** or a **Meryl Streep** before they would greenlight a project. These days it's the boyish charm of a DiCaprio, Damon or Affleck that draws teenage girls, the new targets of marketing mavens. Hollywood's new motto, apparently, is Youth Must Be Served.

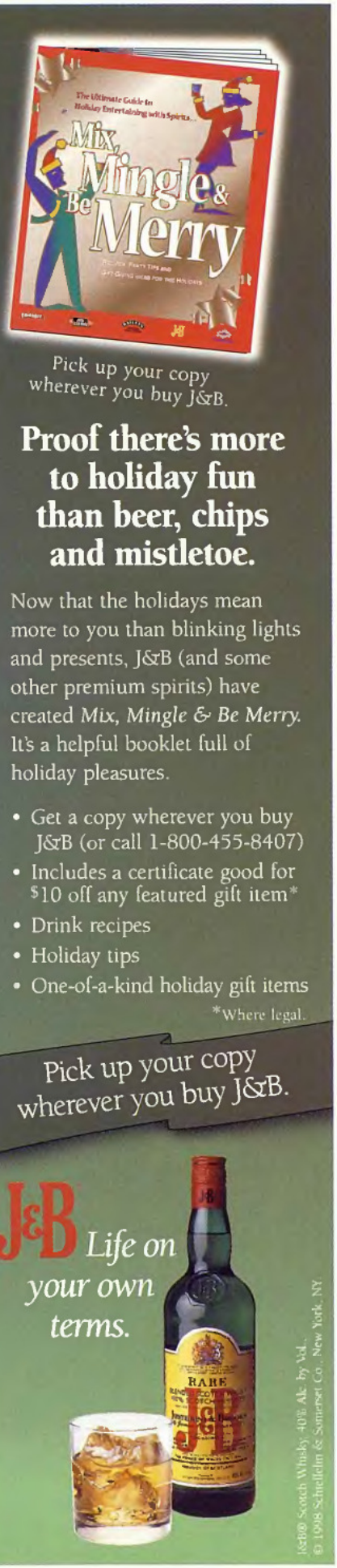
That said, no woman in her right mind would kick **Sean Connery** or **Clint Eastwood**, each a robust 68, or **Robert Redford**, 61, off the screen—or out of bed. (Two of the sexiest male stars of the decade are Antonio Banderas, 38, and **George Clooney**, 37, not exactly teenyboppers.) Nor would most guys spurn 52-year-old but perennially sexy **Susan Sarandon.** But the buzz is all about a much younger generation of actors, many of whom cut their teeth on television. As entertainment industry analyst Jae Kim pointed out to *USA Today* reporter Janet Weeks: "The most effective casting tool in Hollywood today is *TV Guide*."

DiCaprio got his start on ABC-TV's *Growing Pains*. **Neve Campbell,** *Wild Things*' teen rape victim and queen of the *Scream* franchise, and **Jennifer Love Hewitt** of *Can't Hardly Wait* and the *I Know What You Did Last Summer* movies, come from the cast of *Party of Five*. **Denise Richards,** also of *Wild Things*, did guest shots on *Married With Children*, *Seinfeld* and *Lois and Clark* before nabbing a breakthrough role in *Starship Troopers*. **Sarah Michelle Gellar** landed *Last Summer* and the forthcoming *Cruel Inventions* (yet another riff on the play *Dangerous Liaisons*) on the strength of her series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*—which, in an odd twist, is a hit TV show based on a so-so 1992 movie. Also tube-tested are **Calista** (*Ally McBeal*) **Flockhart, Will** (*Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*) **Smith,** *Melrose Place*'s **Heather Locklear,** herself a veteran of *T.J. Hooker* and *Dynasty*, and the horny teens from *Dawson's Creek*, **Michelle Williams, James Van Der Beek** and **Katie Holmes,** cast in *Halloween: H20*, *Varsity Blues* and *Disturbing Behavior*, respectively. Catherine Zeta-Jones came to Britain's attention in the series *Darling Buds of May*—and was spotted on American TV's Hallmark production of *Titanic* by Steven Spielberg, who got her cast in *Zorro*. **Salma Hayek,** before moving north, was the queen of Mexican soap operas. In the U.S. this year, she made five films, notably *54* and *Dogma*, and is producing and starring in *Frida*, the biography of artist Frida Kahlo. Another veteran of a youth spent on TV, **Rick Schroder** (the spoiled teen of *Silver Spoons*), is settling into the *NYPD Blue* role left vacant by **Jimmy Smits** for supposedly greener Hollywood pastures. Clooney, the roguish heartthrob of TV's top-rated *ER*, will follow Smits off the small screen at the end of this season. It remains to be seen whether his smoky charisma will create as many sparks on the big screen as it does on the small one. **Jennifer Lopez,** in *Out of Sight*, has come closest of any of his movie partners to tapping into Clooney's sexual chemistry. (She sings, too, with a recording contract under her belt.) **Maria Bello** has already departed *ER* for screen roles opposite **Ben Stiller** in *Permanent Midnight*, the true story of writer Jerry Stahl's descent into and rehab from a drug addiction, and in *Payback*, a thriller opposite Mel Gibson. But series regulars **Julianna Margulies, Gloria Reuben** and ballsy Brit newcomer **Alex Kingston,** hitherto best known on this side of the Atlantic as Ralph Fiennes' ex-wife, will keep the gurneys rolling in the top-rated hospital drama.

Over at *Baywatch*—for nearly a decade the world's incubator of well-developed sex goddesses—Playmates **Donna D'Errico** and **Marliece Andrada** and castmate **Traci Bingham** found themselves cast ashore along with **Carmen Electra** (**Gena Lee Nolin** voluntarily joined the exodus). Donna hit a new beach with MTV's *Prima Donna* and a TV movie comedy, *Men in White*, while **Heidi Mark,** Miss July 1995, set sail as cruise director on *The Love Boat: The Next Wave*. Another PLAYBOY pictorial subject with a new gig was **Downtown Julie Brown,** formerly of MTV and E, who is hosting a lifestyle show for the recently launched Cigar TV network.

One exception to Tinseltown's TV-training-ground rule is South African native **Charlize Theron,** 23, whose career as a ballet dancer was cut short by a knee injury. As versatile as she is sexy, Charlize switched to acting and her impressive work in 1997's *The Devil's Advocate* helped land her parts in *Mighty Joe Young*, *The Astronaut's Wife* and Woody Allen's next project, *Celebrity*.

This was also a year of lists—from the 100 best films to *Movieline*'s 100 dumbest things Hollywood has done lately. The British magazine *FHM* ranked the 100 sexiest women in the world, with the top spot going to PLAYBOY's **Jenny McCarthy** (while pictorial subject Carmen Electra took the prominent number six spot). After getting off to a rocky start in two television series, Jenny resurfaced in the wacky screen comedy *Baseketball* and is booked as Betty in the forthcoming movie musical version of the comic strip *Archie*. She's also in line for the **Farrah**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Fawcett role in the projected *Charlie's Angels*.

Among hardworking supermodels, **Elle Macpherson** became, according to the British magazine *Business Age*, the world's wealthiest (estimated worth: $38.4 million)—and a mother, to boot. **Naomi Campbell** did a good deed, hosting a benefit fashion show in South Africa for the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. PLAYBOY's 1997 Playmate of the Year, **Victoria Silvstedt,** posed with twin models **Derek** and **Keith Brewer** on photographer Victor Skrebneski's sexy 1998 Chicago Film Festival poster, then turned over her PMOY crown to schoolteacher **Karen McDougal,** who took a break from the classroom to pursue fame and fortune in Hollywood. **Cindy Crawford,** second only to Elle in *Business Age*'s monied-model rankings ($35.9 million) married restaurateur **Rande Gerber,** posed for a provocative PLAYBOY portfolio by photographer Herb Ritts and signed a multishow deal with ABC-TV. The first special in the series bore an irresistible title: *Sex With Cindy Crawford*.

From the world of music, violinist **Linda Brava** and Ginger Spice **Geri Halliwell** bared their physical assets in PLAYBOY and their instrumental and vocal talents onstage. Geri also made tabloid news when, after her abrupt departure from the Spice Girls, she received a gushy goodbye note from **Prince Charles.**

The Internet is still humming along as a home base for sex stars, with model **Cindy Margolis** the girl most frequently downloaded for a second straight year. **Pamela Anderson** may wish she were less visible on the World Wide Web, given widely disseminated videos of sexcapades with her soon-to-be ex-husband, **Tommy Lee,** and with a former flame, Poison's **Bret Michaels.** But Pam is doing very well with her new syndicated television series, *VIP*, in which she runs a celebrity-bodyguard agency.

Sports fans of varied persuasions had their own idols to admire this year, including boxing's **Oscar de la Hoya,** the NBA's **Michael Jordan,** French soccer hero **Zinedine Zidane,** tennis wunderkind **Anna Kournikova** and WNBA star **Lisa Leslie.**

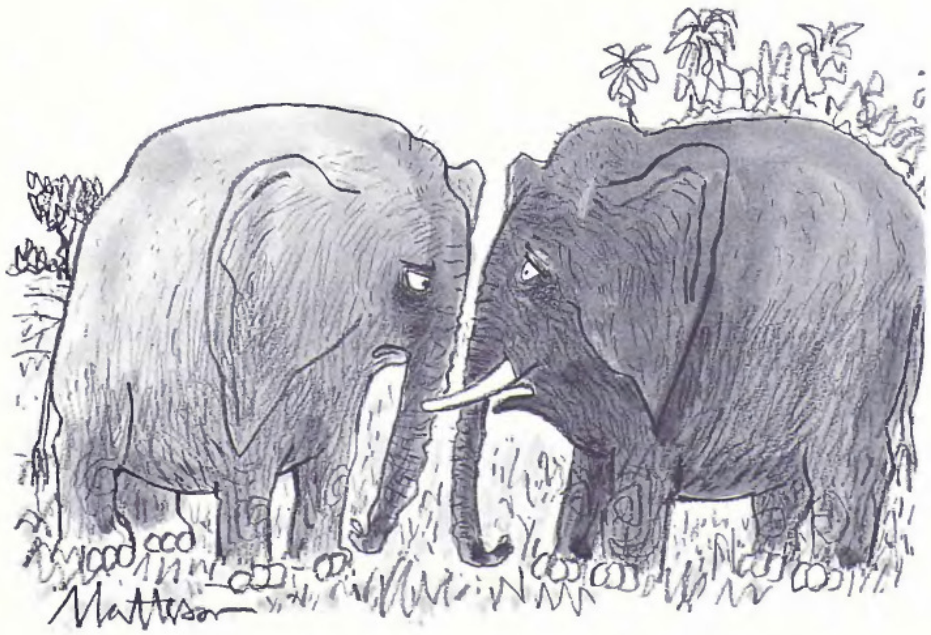
Who's Dating Whom has been a popular media pastime since the days of Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons, but this year it seemed as if our young idols were playing a game of Musical Stars. **Gwyneth Paltrow,** after her widely publicized split from **Brad Pitt,** was soon seen on the arm of Ben Affleck, whose *Good Will Hunting* co-star, Matt Damon, broke up with his love interest in that movie, **Minnie Driver,** in favor of **Winona Ryder.** Minnie, meanwhile, has taken up with the Foo Fighters' drummer, **Taylor Hawkins.** Pitt has reportedly been seeing *Friends*' **Jennifer Aniston** or **Maria Pitillo** of *House Rules* and *Godzilla*, depending on which gossip show you follow. (Actually, after *Seven Years in Tibet*, Pitt vanished into thin air. He's been filming two remakes: the imminent *Meet Joe Black*, based on the 1934 Fredric March classic *Death Takes a Holiday*, and *Ambrose Chapel*, a retrofit of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. He's also working on a film of *Fight Club*, from a debut novel by recent University of Oregon grad Chuck Palahniuk.) **Liv Tyler,** whose beauty and talents have been enlisted by directors Bernardo Bertolucci, Miloš Forman, Oliver Stone and Robert Altman, dates actor Joaquin (*Return to Paradise*, *Clay Pigeons*) Phoenix. **Drew Barrymore,** all grown up and relatively settled down in such fare as *The Wedding Singer* and the *Cinderella* update *Ever After*, is dating actor **Luke Wilson.** After a three-year bicoastal romance, **Cameron Diaz** split from her *Something About Mary* co-star **Matt Dillon,** who, *Premiere* speculated, may have a Dorian Gray–style portrait in his attic, for his dark good looks remain the same as they were 14 years ago in *The Flamingo Kid*.

There have been rumors, so far unsubstantiated, that Jim Carrey—hot off *The Truman Show* and busy with remakes of *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* and *The Incredible Mr. Limpet*—is reconciling with his erstwhile wife, **Lauren Holly,** and that **Halle Berry** is doing likewise with her ballplayer ex, **David Justice.** (Carrey, however, showed up unattached for the Midsummer Night's Dream party at Playboy Mansion West, and our only sports news concerning Halle is that she's scheduled to make a boxing movie, *Ringside*, directed by fight fan Norman Mailer.)

So who's waiting in the wings for a chance at sex stardom? Our crystal ball—along with everyone else's—was slightly clouded last year, when we predicted big things for **Matthew McConaughey, Ewan McGregor** and Jenny McCarthy in 1998. They're all still here, but 1998 hasn't seen them in their prime. McConaughey, who made a greater impression on fan-mag writers than he did at ticket windows in *Amistad* and *The Newton Boys*, is branching out to direction (a short documentary) and production (*Last Flight of the Raven*, no relation to the Carmen Electra vehicle). He also stars in *Ed TV*, due out next year, which sounds all too derivative of *The Truman Show*. McGregor has made six movies this year, but at this writing only *Velvet Goldmine* has been released. Next year, however, he will produce and star (as James Joyce) in *Nora*, based on the work by the Irish novelist, and will portray the young Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars: Episode I*.

We're willing to climb out on a limb again, but this time we're betting on the girls. **Christina Ricci** has matured since her gig as Wednesday in *The Addams Family* movies, vamping shamelessly in *The Opposite of Sex* and *Buffalo '66*. "I don't think I'll be reformed until I'm well into my 50s," she told one interviewer. We hope not. **Reese Witherspoon** amazed as a slutty teen in the underestimated *Twilight*, starring **Paul Newman** and Susan Sarandon, and she's due next year in that *Dangerous Liaisons* remake, *Cruel Inventions*. Gretchen Mol? *Vanity Fair* names her the It Girl.

Here at PLAYBOY: After meeting her and being bowled over by her personality, we're laying our entire grubstake on Cameron Diaz. She's a natural.



"I know you can't forget, but can you forgive?"

HOLIDAY OFFICE PARTY

(continued from page 106)

your wit and gives you the power to read minds. Go for the highest quality you can find—something aged at least 12 years. No generic brands. Any scotch made in Detroit, for example, is not a legitimate elixir for our purposes. You want to get a few under your belt right away, and then you can make small talk with your supervisors and lieutenants. Nothing substantial is going to occur until you get into your new mantle of superhuman scotchoid. You'll want to have some kind of snack so you don't peak too suddenly. You want the scotch to blend in. You don't have to worry about avoiding garlic or salsa or onion dip because another wonderful thing about scotch is that it's the ultimate disinfectant and mouthwash. It destroys anything that it comes across. Feel free to go for the most vile offerings on the buffet table—salami, beef jerky, whatever. They're no match for a great scotch.

I was a child of the Sixties—I've done it all—but I think scotch is the perfect nothing-makes-you-smarter drink. It's psychedelic, too. You really feel like you can see through walls, and you could have a flashback to the days of love-ins.

IMBIBING

Go two double scotches in the first ten minutes. That's straight up or on the rocks. I prefer rocks. No soda, no water. Then you can go one to two double scotches an hour. You wouldn't want to do more than 12 double scotches, probably. One of the great things about scotch is that it's the most controllable form of alcohol. It burns at an even rate. There are no sudden spikes of inebriation. Being a purist, I would never touch a punch bowl. You know damn well that the kid from the mail room has poured in some Grateful Dead substance. You don't want anything to put you off your game. I'm a strong believer in designated drivers. Take a cab. You don't want to risk everything for one mad moment behind the wheel.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

Never take a date unless it's someone with whom you have an absolute understanding. One of the best things you can do is take someone from your office clique—someone who has her own agenda and will be running down the same moves. If it's an ally, you can work in concert. Never take a date you're going to have to pander and cater to throughout the party because, after all, it's part celebration, part commando raid. You're there trying to work magic. It's the one time of year when the rigid corporate structure is in disarray. You want to be able to float around like a ninja with all your senses finely tuned and enhanced by 12-year-old scotch.

The best way to snake someone's woman is to find that brief moment when you can sidle up to her. You don't have to speak to her directly—just get within her auditory range while he's distracted. For example, I like to back up to a woman, pretend I'm talking to somebody else and then say something that would be embarrassing to your rival, like, "Gee, Jerry's transplants look great. It's like a natural hairline," or "Jerry's calf implants are wonderful. If I had skinny calves, I'd do that," or "Sure, Jerry has a great smile. Dental plates are cheap." Or just impugn his ethics and morality—"Yeah, Jerry was with Joey Buttafuoco that night. How he got off I'll never know." Those kinds of comments work on a woman's mind in the most subtle ways.

Look for the married guy who takes off his wedding ring when he attends a party. I always keep a pocketful of wedding rings. When the married guy is hovering over some delectable creature, walk up with a wedding ring and say, "Jerry, I found this on the washbasin. Is it yours?"

THE BUFFET LINE

You don't go to a party to diet. If your eyes are crossing regularly, if you're seeing double or quadruple, get some fat into your system fast—a good sour cream–based clam dip or any kind of sausage in a blanket or ice cream will do. You need something to cut the absorption of alcohol. But if you're feeling OK, avoid the food. A real scotch drinker can control his intake so that when his eyes are just starting to cross, he can, through force of will, separate them and keep them on track.

You're going to want to make use of the cookies. Holiday cookies are mainly fun props—put them over your eyes and pretend you're a blind man or stick a chocolate chip cookie to your forehead and ask if anybody has any Clearasil.

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Once you're in the zone, you have to stake out an area to perform in. You need a place to run your show. I like the Xerox room and its paper supply, because you can make paper airplanes—a true art. They're fun and they have that poke-somebody's-eye-out quality that can be so exciting.

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ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED!

party, you are master of the entire situation. If one of your rivals is on some game that's drawing a bigger crowd, you have to work harder. You have to Xerox a butt without underpants. You have to entertain. It's like any other form of show business—it's competitive. You have to do your best. At this point, there's bound to be an office conga line. That's when you take the party from your power base and snake your way around the entire facility. That's when you express, in concrete terms, that you're a people person and that you have an elevated appreciation for humanity, though most people you despise on an individual basis. A conga line is a great common denominator. You just grab some hips and join in. There's no discrimination. It's where people from the loading dock can mingle with management and the FedEx delivery guys can grab on to the boss' secretary. It's just one big, happy, twisted DNA chain of humanity working its way around the office.

MANAGING THE BOSS

Sooner or later you're going to steal focus from whatever the boss is doing. You may notice that the boss is left in an impotent, innocuous position, sitting in his office with only the most sycophantic of his agents still hanging on while the party is like fireworks outside his door. That's when you move in. Have some sort of agenda to run down on him, and have it planned out ahead of time. You have to go through the back door with this kind of brownnosing. You can't be direct, like, "Have you lost weight?" or, "I didn't even know that was a rug." Find out his ethnic background and compliment him accordingly: "I've always felt the Lithuanians are such brilliant people." If you can, mention a famous Lithuanian: "If Vaclav Hershel hadn't invented the convex lens, all hyperopic people would be in a terrible jam right now. What would have happened to the world?" It's a way of stroking someone without being an obvious brownnoser.

I find I get very emotional when I drink scotch, so it's a chance to really share my feelings and get a little misty-eyed about last year's profit-sharing plan. It's the one time you can hug your boss or, if you're really successful, kiss him on the mouth. A kiss on the mouth has more power than is visible to the naked eye for two reasons: One, it may be the highlight of his night romantically, and two, it may be the most embarrassing moment of the year for him. In the latter case, you have something on him. He's going to be conscious of that for the rest of your tenure at the firm, however brief it may be. You can always say, "He initiated it."

ASSESSING THE PARTY GUESTS

You can tell how drunk a woman is by how high her knees lift when she's doing the watusi and how quickly her head snaps from side to side when she's doing the jerk. Just watch the dancers and you can quickly find an easy mark. Also, by the middle of the evening, figure out who at the party has remained the most sober and get him or her to promise to drive you home.

WORKING THE ROOM

Be a people person. Say hello to everyone. It's easy when you're loaded. Take extra effort to make eye contact with people you wouldn't usually give the time of day. Just bond. You never know when you're going to need a favor from somebody. Try to learn people's names, for goodness' sake. People are happy when others know they exist. It's good to have a party list. That's part of the homework—to know who's going to be there. Go through your photos from last year's party.

It's always great to carry a mistletoe harness. You can make one with a coat hanger. It goes around your neck and up the back and hangs over your head. When a worthy target presents itself, you can slip it on and say, "Oh, look where we are!"

Making out on the sofa where the coats and bags have been thrown is absolutely proper. It's easy to go through wallets—not with the intent of stealing anything but to learn which neighborhoods people live in and who might be worth getting to know. Look for country club membership cards, who has a gold card, who doesn't. Sometimes a frequent flier card means a cheap companion ticket.

If you can accidentally mistake someone else's Armani for your Mani, who's going to know? It's a difference of about $2000. There's always the chance that you won't get called on it.

THE DEPARTURE

I'm a big fan of the phantom exit. If you've done your work properly, you've sort of mind-fucked the boss. Wait for some of the key players to leave, and always leave after your office rival, because a few well-placed comments will plant the seeds for his undoing.

Wait for things to quiet down and when you know your boss is watching, do a little cleanup. Show that you're a team player. Help straighten up the buffet table and collect some empties. Show that you're Mr. Ecology and separate glass bottles by color. Make sure you're in your boss' sight line, but never establish eye contact.

Another way to endear yourself to your superior is to serve as a bodyguard. If your boss is making out with his secretary or a co-worker in the corner of his office, brace yourself in the door. Be a human rampart. He'll be grateful. Those little contributions help.

Whatever you do, don't crash at the party. If you do, you prove you're no samurai. You are of the lower caste. You're an untouchable. A true samurai never lets the flag touch the ground.

PLAY Myths
WELL, ANOTHER BROTHER CLAUS! WHAT DEPARTMENT STORE ARE YOU WORKING?
OH, I'M NOT. THIS SUIT WAS A SURPRISE FROM MY WIFE FOR THE HOLIDAYS!
REALLY?
YEAH! I CAME HOME UNEXPECTEDLY ONE NIGHT AND THERE IT WAS ON THE BACK OF A CHAIR!
BAR
GIVE

PLAYMATE NEWS

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

After barreling down the driveway of Playboy Mansion West in the wake of its big send-off (see *Playmate News*, November), the Playmate 2000 Search Bus headed north on the first leg of its 47-city quest for the lady who will grace the Centerfold of the January 2000 issue of PLAYBOY.

Aboard the Search Bus, photographers and crew members looked forward to the first wave of Playmate candidates who would greet them in Vancouver, British Columbia. And they weren't disappointed. As America gave way to Canada, hordes of comely Vancouverites began descending on the rolling caravan, each one eager to fill out an application form, loosen her buttons and smile for Polaroids.

Playmate 2000 candidates in the great Northwest (from left): Sara (Seattle), Delia (Portland), Tamela (Portland), Jadi (Vancouver) and Carrie (Portland).

Among the many Playmate hopefuls were Careyanne, a beauty who said her grandmother had persuaded her to come on down; earthy Julia, a daughter of hippies who enjoys "celebrating nudity"; and Jassy, a payroll clerk in the Canadian military.

Soon the media began filing reports on the Playmate auditions, triggering an avalanche of women ready to squeeze into a bikini (or less) for search photographer David Mecey, who then digitally transmitted the images back to search headquarters in Chicago.

The arrival of the bus at its next stop, Seattle, was dampened by some healthy competition: a Garth Brooks concert. But Garthmania soon ebbed, and women began milling around the Search Bus, which was parked in the shadow of the Space Needle. A local artist named Shannon happened upon the bus on her way to pick up her car from a repair shop. Next thing she knew, she was defrocked and demure before Mecey's lens.

The Vancouver and Seattle turnouts were eye-openers, but Portland really got our blood pumping. According to search chronicler Leif Ueland, "Not only were the Portland candidates pretty, but they were also on fire with a kind of animal magnetism that came as a surprise to even our search team members. Somewhere along the way the planets shifted, and things got very sexy, very fast."

And that was just the first three stops on the search. Only 44 more cities to go. Stay tuned.

PLAYMATE BIRTHDAYS — DECEMBER

December 7: Miss February 1967
Kim Farber
December 10: Miss November 1995
Holly Witt
December 11: Miss December 1986
Laurie Carr
December 13: Miss February 1959
Eleanor Bradley
December 14: Miss May 1973
Anulka Dziubinska

40 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

The 50-cent December 1958 issue was a collector's dream, featuring fiction by Garson Kanin: *We're Running a Little Late* (the plot: "Can a glamorous movie star find happiness in the arms of a lowly photographer?"), a yuletide gift guide (dig that snazzy walnut-and-Formica bar) and a special Fifth-Anniversary Scrapbook (including a vintage shot of Hef in top hat and tails and a photograph of the new Playboy Building in Chicago). But the issue's real prize was at its stapled center: December Playmate—and "merry Miami model"—Joyce Nizzari. Five months earlier, Joyce had donned shades and a Rabbit Head bikini for a PLAYBOY cover that was an instant classic. As we explained in Joyce's Centerfold copy: "Letters came pouring in, demanding, 'Who is she? Take off those sunglasses! Make her a Playmate!'" So we did.

Joyce: On the dock, on the cover.

PLAYMATE QUIZ

Most Playmate experts can identify a Centerfold by her face. But how many fans can name that dame by body type or clothing alone? Below, we've hidden the countenances of five Playmates whose looks are unique to their eras. Novices need only pick the decades; aficionados should go for the women's names. (Answers are on the next page.)

PLAYMATE NEWS

My Favorite Playmates By Roger Ebert

It's a tie between Miss December 1968 Cynthia Myers and Miss May 1966 Dolly Read. Why this pair? Because they both starred in Russ Meyer's *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*—which I wrote. Dolly played the lead singer of a rock trio who ditches her loyal boyfriend-manager to sign up with a "teenage tycoon of rock" and shack up with a gigolo. Cynthia played another trio member, who later spurns that same hapless boyfriend and turns to lesbianism. According to Leonard Maltin's *Movie & Video Guide*, the film made two ten-best lists of Seventies films. And I have even heard rumors that it might be remade. That would be unwise, since it is one of a kind.

FAN MAIL

Dear Maria Checa:

I had to write you to let you know I think you're one of the most beautiful women in the world. And I mean that sincerely.

I am single, and I have dreamed of finding someone like you. In addition to your Playmate pictorial, I have seen your many photos over the years. I have watched your Playmate video. And I am convinced that you are sweet and special. This may sound crazy, but I think of you as a Colombian Cinderella. Unique in every way—from your magnificent smile to your voice (on the video).

I just had to let you know how I feel. Best of luck and God bless you.

Michael Gonzales
Socorro, New Mexico

QUOTE UNQUOTE

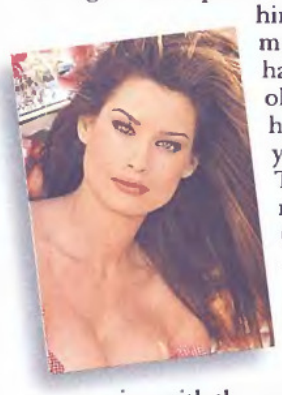
You've probably seen Miss June 1997 Carrie Stevens on TV recently, either featured in a Playmate special on E or guest-starring on *Beverly Hills 90210*. Next up? A role in *Black Scorpion*, a new series in which Carrie plays "an evil belly dancer who lures information from men and then gets them to do whatever she wants."

Q: What's the key to belly dancing?

A: It's all in the hips. You have to pretend they're the only bones in your body. I had started taking belly dancing lessons just for the hell of it, then I got this part.

Q: Has anyone ever tried to lure you onto a casting couch?

A: No one has directly told me that he'd give me a part if I had sex with him. But I have met guys who have tried that old line, "I can help you with your career." That really makes me mad.



Q: How does a guy win you over?

A: I tend to choose men instead of going with the ones who choose me. I can look at a guy just once—without even speaking to him—and know whether I'm going to sleep with him.

Q: How do you do that? What do you look for?

A: It's hard to explain. It's in his eyes, the way he stands, his presence. I pick up on people's energies. I'm in tune with all that spiritual stuff. I get weird psychic vibes. And I can always spot a guy who just wants to get laid.

Q: What's the worst pick-up line that you've heard?

A: Some guy came up to me recently and said, "Hi, I'm a PLAYBOY photographer." I said, "That's funny, because I'm a Playmate and I've never met you." That did the trick.

PLAYMATE QUIZ: ANSWERS

1 Miss September 1985 Venice Kong

2 Miss September 1971 Crystal Smith

3 Miss April 1997 Kelly Monaco

4 Miss August 1956 Jonnie Nicely

5 Miss April 1967 Gwen Wong

PLAYMATE GOSSIP

PLAYBOY Playmates have both ends of the tooth-care spectrum covered: Miss February 1998 **Julia Schultz** appears in her first national TV spot, for Starburst fruit chews, while Miss August 1995 **Rachel Jeán Marteen** smiles it up in a commercial for Plus White toothpaste. . . . Hugh Hefner popped in at the recent Glamourcon festivities in Los Angeles. Hef greeted his fans, shook hands, signed autographs and hammed it up for the cameras with, among other Playmates,

LEROY NEIMAN

Hef and Tina da Glamourcon.

Miss May 1990 **Tina Bockrath**. . . . No, you're not mistaken, that is Miss July 1997 **Daphnee Lynn Duplaix** lending her good looks to a national print ad for Durex condoms. Daphnee will also log in as co-host of *The Profession*, a vignette series coming soon to Playboy TV. . . . Miss September 1997 **Nikki Schieler** appears in an indie film called *Six Pennies and a Handgun*. No surprise in casting: She plays a "fantasy dream girl." . . . In terms of videos, 1998 was great for Playmate of the Year **Karen McDougal**. Not only does Karen star in her *Video Centerfold*, but she also graces the box cover of the newly released 1999 *Video Playmate Calendar*. . . . Most enterprising project of the month: a new how-to book co-authored by Miss March 1990 **Deborah Driggs**. The subject? Pubic-hair grooming. Go ahead and laugh—we've already ordered our copy.

McDougal's video double take.

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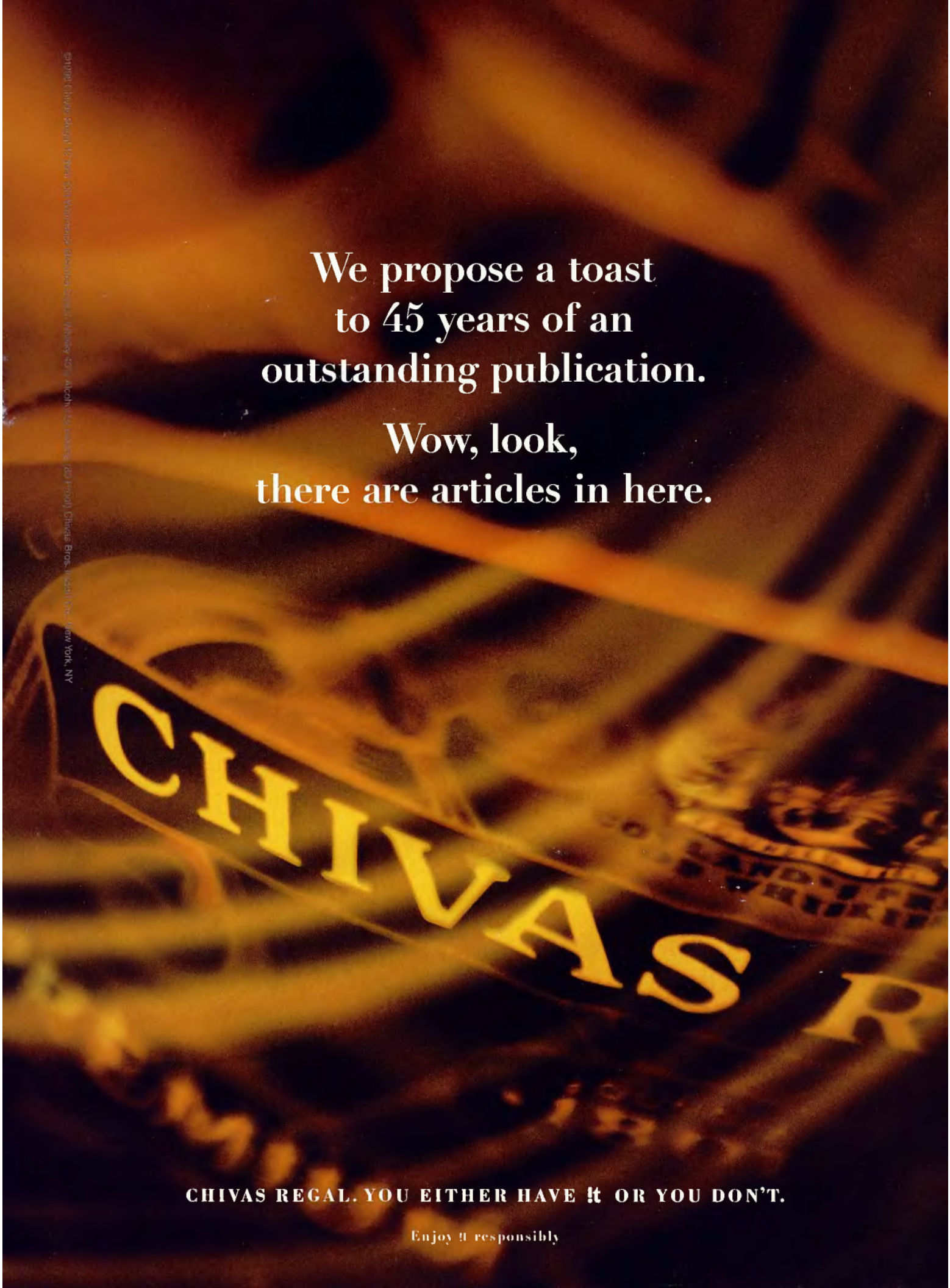

We propose a toast
to 45 years of an
outstanding publication.
Wow, look,
there are articles in here.
CHIVAS
CHIVAS REGAL. YOU EITHER HAVE It OR YOU DON'T.
Enjoy it responsibly

PLAYBOY

ON·THE·SCENE

WHAT'S HAPPENING, WHERE IT'S HAPPENING AND WHO'S MAKING IT HAPPEN

HOLIDAY SMALL TALK

This holiday, "mine is smaller than yours" bragging rights go straight into the Christmas stocking. We're talking great luxury toys here—not soap from the Body Shop or candy bars. Philips' new Windows-driven Nino 300 Personal Companion is no bigger than a pack of smokes but keeps you in touch with e-mail, and offers handwriting- and voice-recognition features, too. The pint-size stainless-steel camera pictured below is Minolta's Vectis 300 Beam APS model, with a 24mm to 70mm zoom and the capacity for close-up, panoramic and regular shots. AZX USA makes a golf watch that stores scores for up to 50 rounds and tells time, plus more. Want to be on the cutting edge? Put Spyderco's Mini-Dyad twin-blade pocketknife on your Xmas wish list.

Below, clockwise from top left: Spyderco's Mini-Dyad pocketknife with clip-point and sheep's foot–shaped blades ($85.95). Bourbon and Water acrylic single-reed duck call by BGB Inc. ($135). Golf Scoring Watch by AZX USA performs regular digital functions and also keeps track of shots, putts and par (about $40). A. Hardy cognac in a 200 ml Fisherman's Flask bottle (about $35). Minolta's supersmall Vectis 300 Beam APS camera with a 24–70mm zoom (about $350). The Nino 300 Personal Companion operates on Windows CE and keeps you in touch with e-mail, contacts, tasks, etc., and responds to voice commands, by Philips (about $460). Stetson Country cologne by Coty ($18.50 for 1.7 fl. oz.).

JAMES IMBRIOGNO

WHERE TO BUY ON PAGE 195.

Busting Out in Basic Black

Do SONIA BRAGA (left) and TAYLOR DAYNE (below) know the same designer? Braga was in the TV series *Four Corners* and is now in a miniseries (*A Will of Their Own*) and the movie *From Dusk Till Dawn: The Hangman's Daughter*. Dayne made *Stag* last year with Mario Van Peebles, Jerry Stiller and Andrew McCarthy. Her most recent CD is *Naked Without You*. We don't know who started the see-through-top craze, but *Grapevine* salutes you.

© PAUL SCHMULBACK/GLOBE PHOTOS

© KEVIN WINTER/CELEBRITY PHOTO

Much Ado About Jim

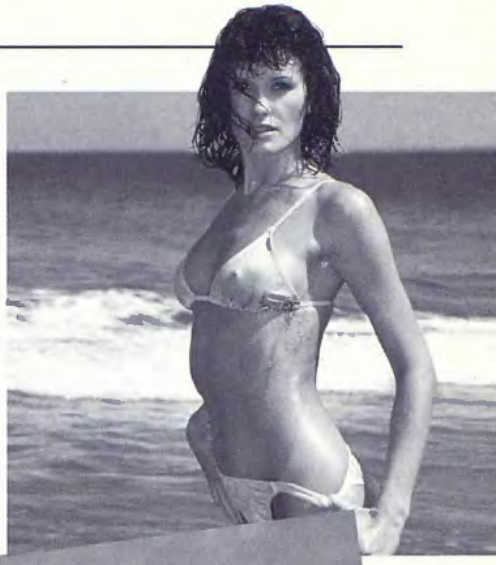
The Truman Show took JIM CARREY from likable dork to serious funnyman. Look for him next in *Man on the Moon*, the Andy Kaufman bio. He's currently developing remakes of films that starred Don Knotts and Danny Kaye. Can Will S. be far behind?

© BARBRA ROTH/RETNA LTD. USA

© PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE INC

Lana Makes Waves

LANA PIRYAN is Campari's spokesmodel. She has walked the high-fashion runways, appeared in a national commercial and swooned over Alec Baldwin in a *Saturday Night Live* comedy skit.



STEVE TORRES

Bluesman

This is JOHN LEE HOOKER's 50th year recording the blues. His recent CD *The Best of Friends* is a compilation of collaborations with Bonnie Raitt and Eric Clapton, among others.

Water, Water, Everywhere

You will thank us for sharing VERONIKA ZEMANOVA. This is what working out did for the Czech beauty. She should keep it up.

© DOUGLAS STEGLITZER

No Hidden Assets

TAYLOR CAMPBELL can be found in a *Miss Hot Body International* video, this past spring's *Cover Models* magazine and the 1999 *Tantalizing Take-offs* calendar. Taylor certainly tantalizes us.

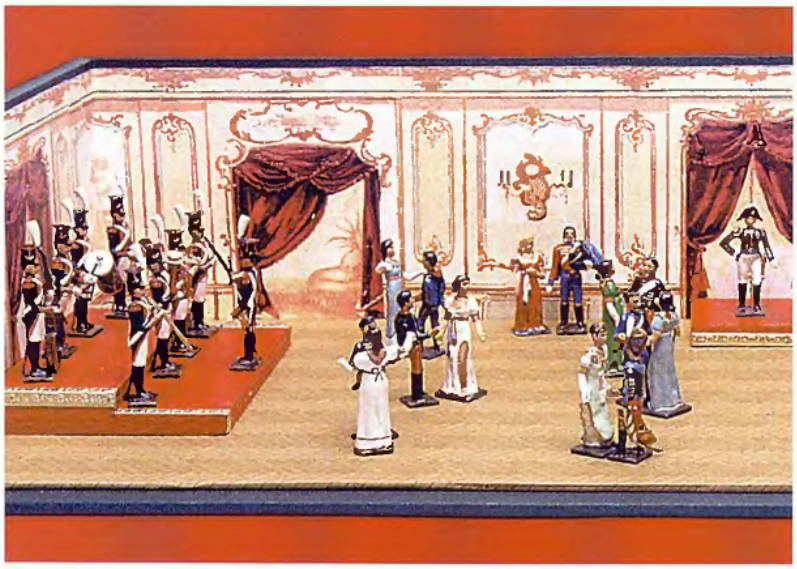
KNOCKOUT EXERCISE

SlamMan is the perfect sparring partner—he doesn't hit back. But you still get a hell of a workout as you punch away at his eight LEDs. Incorporated into SlamMan's technology are 15 programs developed by a professional boxer. In addition to giving you a terrific upper-body workout, SlamMan helps you build stamina and sharpen your hand–eye coordination and reflexes. He's also a great tension reliever. Poke him instead of your boss next time you need to vent. A computer will show you how many hits you have scored, and there are adjustments for hard or soft punches, length of workout and height (64″, 68″ and 72″). SlamMan comes with a pair of 12-ounce boxing gloves and a video that demonstrates various punches. You just add sand to his base to keep him upright. The price: $300, including a one-year warranty. Call Fitness Quest at 800-321-9236 to order.

TOY CRAZY

Toys of the Past is like a walk through your rich grandfather's attic. On the 55-minute video, Dr. William Furnish, a preeminent toy collector, takes you on a tour of his vast collection, which contains thousands of playthings manufactured between 1890 and 1970. TM Books and Video sells *Toys* (and other Christmas toy videos) for $19.95. Call 800-892-2822 to order, or visit tmbooks-video.com.

STEVE BOSWICK



RETURN OF THE VERY LITTLE CORPORAL

Mignon of France has been creating toy soldiers and other miniature figures for more than 200 years, and early offerings command top dollar at auctions. But few of its creations can compare to *A Napoleonic Ball*, a diorama of Napoléon in Paris (in 1807) that features 43 54mm figures, including a Lancer band. The 22″x10″x5½″ diorama is available in a limited edition of 100, each housed in a beautiful case that forms the walls of the ballroom. Bryerton's Military Miniatures, 2121 South Racine, Chicago, Illinois 60608, sells the set for $1695. To order, call the company at 312-666-2800, and ask about other collectibles.

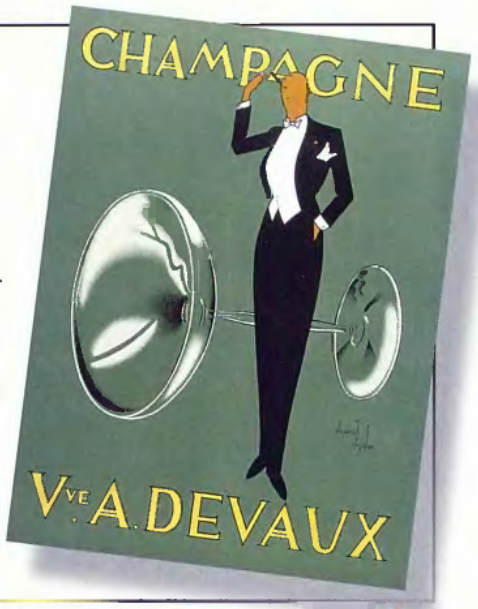
MARS VERSUS VENUS: THE GAME

Now that you've read *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*, get ready to play the Game. Teams advance on the gameboard when they correctly guess how their opponents will answer questions in seven categories—including sex. Sample question: If sex were a circus, men would be: (a) masters of ceremonies; (b) lion tamers; or (c) clowns in the small car. The first team to reach Earth on the board wins. The Game costs about $25.

JOHN SCHAFFLER

POSTER MAN

Wine and spirits, tobacco, travel, transportation and other trappings of the good life are featured in Miscellaneous Man's $10 catalog of vintage posters. The Ernst Dryden poster-on-canvas pictured at right sells for $375. Others range in price from a $75 World War II poster to a rare $2500 one that depicts a Canadian Pacific ocean liner. Telephone 800-647-0069 to place an order, or send a check for the catalog to Box 1000, New Freedom, Pennsylvania 17349.



OH, CHRISTMAS TREE

Last year, PLAYBOY Modern Living Editor David Stevens served himself too much holiday cheer and tipped over his Christmas tree. Never again, he vowed, and he invested in a Swivel Straight—the Christmas tree stand pictured here, which can support a pine up to 12 feet tall. It features a foot pedal–controlled action that makes standing and straightening your *Tannenbaum* a snap. Price: about $70. Call 800-692-6056 for info on where to buy.

SAUNA, HOW WE LOVE YOU

By now, you've seen the Dahm triplets relaxing in a sauna on page 128. Although you can't buy the custom room used in that shoot, Baltic Leisure, the company that supplied the unit, sells a variety of kits at reasonable prices. For example, a 3′x4′ room ready for assembly is $1400, and a 12′x12′ sauna, the largest precut model offered, is $5000. (All prices include heater, benches, bucket and more.) There's even a 4′x4′ outdoor sauna for $2800. Call 800-441-7147.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

Schiffer's latest offering, *Forbidden Art: The World of Erotica*, by Miss Naomi, is a far cry from this specialty publisher's usual line of books about such esoteric collectibles as early transistor radios and vintage matchbook holders. In fact, *Forbidden Art* is a hardcover (and hard-core) volume that's probably more appropriate for your nightstand than for your coffee table. Price: $49.95. Call 610-593-1777 to place an order.

MAKING BOOK ON CHRISTMAS

This holiday, look for these new Yule titles. *Santa: My Life and Times*, a charming illustrated fantasy, is "the book that will make you believe again" ($25). *The Christmas Tree Book* includes more than 60 gorgeous trees decorated by famous people ($24.95). The porno fantasy *Santa Steps Out*, "A Fairy Tale for Grown-ups," definitely isn't for kids ($39.95). *The Physics of Christmas* covers unusual facts of the season, "from the aerodynamics of reindeer to the thermodynamics of turkey" ($19.50).

NEXT MONTH: SPECIAL 45TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

ANNIVERSARY PLAYMATE

AN AFFAIR

A HONEYMOON

SEX STARS

45TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTOR'S ISSUE—WE PULLED OUT ALL THE STOPS. **STEVE MARTIN** ON VIAGRA, **BRUCE JAY FRIEDMAN** ON FOOLING AROUND, **DEEPAK CHOPRA** ON MIRACLES, **ROBERT STONE** ON HONEYMOONS, **TOM CLANCY** ON A KILLER INSIDE THE PENTAGON AND **KURT VONNEGUT** ON THE MILLENNIUM

SEX STARS OF THE CENTURY—MARILYN MONROE, BETTIE PAGE, RITA HAYWORTH, URSULA ANDRESS, SHARON STONE. WE RATE THE STEAMIEST SIRENS—YOU GET TO LOOK

MICHAEL CRICHTON—NAME THE BLOCKBUSTER—*THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN, JURASSIC PARK, TWISTER, DISCLOSURE*—AND HE'S WRITTEN IT. AT LONG LAST, THE BEST-SELLING WRITER REVEALS HIS SECRETS TO PLAYBOY IN AN INTERVIEW WITH **JOHN REZEK** AND **DAVID SHEFF**

KIRSTIE ALLEY—TV'S BRASHEST LASS TALKS ABOUT THE POWER OF SCIENTOLOGY AND WHY MEN SHOULD NEVER WEAR UNDERWEAR—20 QUESTIONS BY **DAVID RENSIN**

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DOOM—WHEN HEF MEETS 007, AN ANNUAL PARTY TURNS INTO MAYHEM AND MURDER. NEW **JAMES BOND** FICTION BY **RAYMOND BENSON**

CAN YOU TALK TO A SUPERMODEL?—IT'S YOUR FANTASY. BUT ARE YOU MAN ENOUGH TO GET HER DIGITS? WE LEND HELP WITH THIS QUIZ BY **CHRIS NAPOLITANO**

WOMEN AND POLITICS—THE HOST OF *POLITICALLY INCORRECT* EXPLAINS WHY WOMEN CAN'T HACK TALKING ABOUT CURRENT AFFAIRS. BY **BILL MAHER**

BOMBAY BABYLON—A SPECTACLE OF WILD EXTREMES. INDIA RANKS NUMBER ONE IN COMPUTER SOFTWARE AND EUNUCHS. OUR INTREPID REPORTER BRAVES THE SIGHTS AND SMELLS—TRAVEL BY **JOE DOLCE**

PLUS: COLLEGE BASKETBALL PREVIEW, THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN—THE **TOP SPORTS CARS** OF THE PAST 45 YEARS, A RAUCOUS **YEAR IN SEX, ELEVENTH-HOUR SANTA** AND, OF COURSE, OUR **PLAYMATE REVIEW**

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